# Valley Voice

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## Hanford Mulls Major Zoning Changes

**Dave Adalian**

With the City Council mulling changes to decades-old zoning ordinances, the commercial landscape of Hanford could be in for some changes that may alter the flavor of the city's unique downtown business district.

Downtown Hanford by night.

At an evening town hall meeting February 24 at the Civic Auditorium, preserving the charms of Hanford's downtown business district while keeping business booming throughout the city were the goals in mind. Possible zoning ordinance changes were the hot topic as business people and citizens presented their views on what changes they would like to see and the possible consequences.

"This all started when the Costco folks asked for

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## Farm Exporters Try to Pick Up Pieces After Port Deal

**Ching Lee**

Operations at West Coast ports are returning to their normal pace after a contract deal was struck between dockworkers and shippers, but California agricultural exporters say their business won't be back to normal for quite some time, as they deal with the enormous backlog of shipments that must be cleared at the ports.

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association, which represents shipping lines and terminal operators, announced a tentative agreement late last Friday after nearly 10 months of negotiations. The new five-year contract covers some 20,000 workers at 29 West Coast ports, which had experienced major slowdowns during the prolonged labor dispute.

Agricultural exporters say while they are encouraged by the news of the settlement, they also say they expect it will take several weeks to months for the ports to sort out the current stockpile of cargo before goods can begin to move on a more timely basis.

"Certainly all of our issues and problems with this are far from over," said Kevin Severns, general manager of Orange Cove-Sanger Citrus Association, a grower cooperative citrus packinghouse in Fresno County. "Our growers are going to feel the reverberation of this for months to come."

In the meantime, Severns said Sunkist Growers, which sells the association's fruit, has arranged for charter vessels to take some of the shipments to Korea and Japan. This will help to mitigate some of the current problems, but it will not make up for financial losses incurred so far or work slowdowns in the field and at the packinghouse, he said.

He estimates the port slowdown has cost the association's growers about $1.2 million in potential export business so far, not counting employee wages that have been lost due to reduced hours at the plant. Normally this time of year, the packinghouse runs 60 to 70 hours a week, whereas it's now down to 30 to 35 hours, he noted.

The state historically exports 25% of its fresh citrus crop, with the movement of navel oranges and lemons to Asia and other countries starting in late December and running into April, according to California Citrus Mutual. Earlier this

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## Lemon Cove Residents, CEMEX Work on Settlement

**Catherine Doe**

If you say something often enough then people will start to believe it, right? That's what politicians and spin masters do. That also seems to be the modus operandi of CEMEX. At every opportunity Patrick Mitchell, the lawyer for CEMEX, blames the drought on the fact that four domestic wells next to CEMEX' Stillwell mine in Lemon Cove went dry. He says with a straight face that it doesn't matter if the mine is there or not, "It is drought-related that the wells went dry."

Sissy Morton and her grandchildren trying to complete her home dialysis in a sanitary environment with no water.

Tully and Young, an independent consulting group, responded in February of this year to CEMEX' assertion. They reported that, "the shallow groundwater aquifer at the

**CEMEX** continued on **13 »**

## *Visalia Times-Delta* Struggles to Keep Autonomy

**Catherine Doe**

A few days ago a very high profile homicide in Salinas was reported on the front page of the *Visalia Times-Delta* (VTD). If readers were wondering why Tulare County would be interested in a homicide in Salinas, the answer would be that they most likely are not. But local interests don't seem to be the main driving force behind VTD's content anymore -- Gannett is. If recent issues of the Times-Delta are anything to judge by, readers here are going to be learning a lot more about the Salinas Valley--weather and all.

Pete Wevurski has been the interim editor of the *Visalia Times-Delta* since June, 2014. He was named permanent Executive Editor for the VTD earlier this year. He is also the Executive Editor of the *Salinas Californian*. As recetly as January 20, he says he travels between Visalia and Salinas almost weekly. Besides the newspapers, Wevurski is also in charge of two additional publications of the *Salinas Californian*, the *Off 68* and *El Sol*. He runs the four papers' websites.

According to the *Visalia Times-Delta*, Wevurski said, "I'm looking forward to getting to know the people of Tulare County and learn what's important to them and how our coverages can help them." Wevurski is from New Jersey and has never lived nor spent any significant time in the Central Valley prior to Gannett's placing him within our midst. This begs the question – how can you run a local paper when you aren't a local?

The VTD doesn't just share its editor with the Californian, but also its publisher. Paula Goudreau is the president and publisher of the *Salinas Californian* and now does double duty as the president and publisher for the VTD. According to public records, Goudreau lives out of the area and only spends a few days a month in Visalia. She has little experience in the publishing world, as her background is in cable and advertising. After a 20-year marketing career with Comcast she started working for Gannett in 2011 as the general manager of the *Salinas Californian*. As of August 2013, she doubles as president and publisher of the VTD.

The VTD has been slowly losing

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## County Settles Final Lawsuit Challenging County General Plan; Key Part of Plan is Implemented

**Staff Reports**

The last lawsuit challenging the County of Tulare's current general plan was settled last week during the Tulare County Board of Supervisors meeting. In addition, the County has successfully implemented a key part of its general plan in regard to County areas outside of the City of Porterville.

On August 28, 2012, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors approved the Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update. The General Plan Update was then challenged in separate court actions by the City of Porterville and the Sierra Club.

The County and the City of Porterville settled their differences on April 29, 2014. This left the way open for the County to implement its General Plan policies set out in the Part I, Chapter 2, section 2.4 of the County General Plan 2030 Update in the unincorporated areas surrounding the City of Porterville. These policies were designed to promote a close working relationship between the City and the County to determine future land use decisions and to plan for future development of public facilities in these County areas.

The policies also ensure that future land uses in such areas are consistent with City plans, a policy the County has also made available to the seven other cities in the county. This will help in the seamless incorporation of such areas into the City if or when such areas are annexed sometime within the next 50 years. These policies were successfully implemented last week when the County adopted its Porterville Area Community Plan 2015 Update inclusive of GPA 14-008 and the City of Porterville Development Standards and Master Plans for sewer, water and storm drain facilities. The County took this action by unanimous votes without opposition after notice and hearing.

In addition, the Board of Supervisors and the Sierra Club approved a settlement agreement in the Sierra Club's litigation challenging the County's General Plan 2030 Update. This resolved the last pending lawsuit challenging the County's general plan. The settlement agreement, approved by the Board of Supervisors in open session, outlines a number of proposed implementation measures for the general plan. These measures will provide an opportunity for the County to, among other things, take a closer at diesel truck idling, flooding and groundwater recharge areas within the County as well as solar panels for new large residential developments.

The County will be considering most of these proposed measures during the next year and will be undertaking reviews and implementing other current policies during the next several years.

## PERB Rules Against Tulare County

**Kermit Wullschleger**

The Public Employees Relation Board (PERB) has ruled in favor of the Tulare County Employee's Union versus the county. PERB has ordered Tulare County to "make whole" workers

**PERB** continued on **4 »**

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

## Who is Minding the Store?

Back when I was a kid, at about the time one first reads the likes of Hemingway, I became aware not of the Spanish Civil War--that was old hat--but the idea that foreigners would actually migrate to fight in it. I knew that Germany used the conflict as a proving ground, of sorts, for its developing weaponry--and Picasso's "Guernica," I have always thought, did a good job of depicting just how unsavory the results of such behavior could be. From this vantage point I seem to recall that the Soviets could only temporarily match the Nazis in funneling materiel into the war, and that the Republican forces ranged against Franco came increasingly to rely on the intervention of International Brigades. But it was when I was barely of draft age myself, after finishing with Robert Jordan in "For Whom the Bell Tolls," that the notion of travelling overseas all on one's own to fight for a foreign cause first took root in my consciousness.

There is romance in the endeavor--at least when someone of Hemingway's stature writes about it--a dash and derring-do that is much more swashbuckling than irresponsibility. Seriously--who in their right mind would travel halfway around the world to fight for, say, the Nazis?

Know where I'm going with this? I doubt it.

The recent disappearance into Syria of British schoolgirls Shamima Begum and Amira Abase, both 15, and Kadiza Sultana, 16--all three of the Bethnal Green academy in east London--has merely highlighted what the UK's top counter-terrorism police officer has said: Sixty British women and girls, including 18 teenagers, are believed to have travelled to Syria to join Islamic State (ISIS) militants. Worse, deputy assistant commissioner Helen Ball, senior national coordinator for counter-terrorism, further revealed that five of them are believed to be 15 to 16 years old.

Begum, Abase and Sultana all took the same Turkish Airlines flight out of Gatwick airport to Istanbul on February 17.

When kids today describe something as an "epic fail"--if indeed they still do--it is this sort of thing they are referring to. I'm fairly certain, sadly, that these girls are only now discovering just how susceptible they have been to some sickening manipulation. I'll be damned if I can call it recruitment.

People under the age of 18, famously--at least in the West--are not allowed to vote or fight in the armed forces or even sign binding contracts. But you can bet that these girls cast a vote in their flight to Istanbul, and that they signed perhaps the most binding contract of their lives by then joining ISIS. And had they been boys, you could also bet that ISIS would arm them for some form of combat.

So this fail, then, is not strictly on the girls' part; they have, in turn, been failed themselves. Somehow, they have not been protected from the rash--almost hormonal--decisions that so many teenagers are wont to make. Who is minding the proverbial store?

Let me just say this: I've said in the past that, in the nineties, our family lived for five years in Cabo San Lucas. But the very first time either my wife or I attempted to travel with kids alone--and we were not made aware of this until actually at the ticket counter--we discovered that the airline required notarized permission from the parent not travelling. If you ask me, Turkish Airlines fell down, so to speak, on the job.

Some neighborhood kid gets on a flight somewhere and winds up, epically, in Auckland instead of Oakland. It's the kind of thing one reads about in the local paper, right? Well, you could if the *Valley Voice* covered it.

The *Visalia Times-Delta* is now nothing more than the shill in a corporate magic trick purported to be local journalism. Don't believe me? Ask yourself this--just who is minding the store over there? And where, exactly, is the store itself? One can visit the paper's Visalia premises, but the *Times-Delta* is owned by Gannett, which is based in Virginia while operating out of Arizona. Think at least the editor is a local? Think again.

Executive Editor Pete Wevurski lives in the Salinas area--or, more properly, within the 831 area code--where he is also the Executive Editor of the *Salinas Californian.* This is why, for instance, the front page of the February 27 *Times-Delta* features a Salinas homicide story. It is true that the victim was a Visalia native, but not even this tenuous connection explains why, in the weekend edition (February 28-March 1) of the *Times-Delta's* "Local" page, the weather on the central coast was so prominently featured.

This is the first paragraph of the first column I wrote for the *Valley Voice*, back on June 6, 2013:

*Mainstream media, reduced at least to the level of local newspapers, has placed a noose around the neck of our news. Rather than opening a vast panorama of choice, in the same vein as the Internet, local newspapers often constrict our news horizon. Consider the national web of smaller, corporate-owned papers: apart from sports, many lift news stories, and often truncate them, from either the wire or a company home office source. Your hometown paper, in other words, might be entirely from someplace else.*

I don't know if the *Visalia Times-Delta* will ever come back--by which I mean a return to being, truly, a local newspaper. I'm not certain it's possible. I just hope all those poor, deluded girls can somehow find their way home again.

*— Joseph Oldenbourg*


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# Political Fix

Catherine Doe

### History Averted

In the January 1 installment of Political Fix it was announced that Farmersville had possibly the youngest council member ever to be elected in the county. At only 22 years old, Freddy Espinoza took office December 8 along with two other new members.

According to *The Foothills Sun-Gazette*, "Freddy Espinoza, Jr. pulled off the surprise of this years' local elections when he defeated Leonel Benavides' bid for a fourth straight term, 371 to 370." Mr. Espinoza is a 2011 graduate of Farmersville high who got out the vote himself through his Facebook page.

Now it looks like life got in the way of history, and Mr. Espinoza had to resign from his seat as of February 12 because of work. He had not attended a city council meeting since January 26, and came to the conclusion that he wasn't going to be able to juggle his new job and the responsibilities of being a council member.

During the February 23 city council meeting there was some debate among the remaining council members about how to fill the vacancy. Mayor Greg Gomez suggested appointing the second highest vote getter to avoid a repeat of what happened a few years ago.

Mr. Gomez said, "In December 2010, we had Mike Santana leave the city council and we were in the same situation. Rather than go with the next highest vote getter from that election, Paul Boyer, the council chose to ask for letters of interest and then we appointed an ultra conservative to the council. During the next two years we saw our housing program decimated and also the defunding of youth sports from our budget. "

Although two of the council members felt the voters had spoken and wanted to appoint Mr. Benavides, council member Matt Sisk convinced the group to take letters of interest to make the process as transparent as possible. He didn't want to create the appearance that they were just appointing their buddy.

The council has 60 days from the date Mr. Espinoza resigned to fill the vacancy. The direction to staff was to solicit letters of interest and appoint the new council member at the next meeting.

Letters of interest can be dropped off or mailed to the Farmersville City Hall. All letters are due by noon on Friday March 6.

### The Swing Vote Fantasy

A week after the 2012 general election, I opened my *Visalia Times-Delta* to see the final results. I was shocked to see that Mitt Romney had actually beaten Barrack Obama 56% to 42%. After doing a double take I realized that the VTD was reporting on Tulare County's final results. Another election result was that Elizabeth Emken beat Dianne Feinstein for senate by a landslide. Remember her? According to Wikipedia, "Feinstein easily won re-election, breaking the record for the most popular votes in any U.S. Senate election in history in the process."

But Ms. Feinstein lost in Tulare County.

This all came to mind when John Ellis of *The Fresno Bee* pondered the role of the Central Valley in a north-south political clash for California's senate seat in the 2016 election. He mused over which urban Democrat would do the best in the Central Valley and how important the Valley vote will be in 2016.

I can answer that right now, a year and a half before the election--none.

*The Fresno Bee* quoted assembly member Henry T. Perea as saying, "The Valley will play a big role for the first time." Whatever.

The California Latino Legislative Caucus thinks it's time for the state to have a Hispanic senator. So it was to the chagrin of many Hispanics that Former Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa quite wisely announced that he will not run for Barbara Boxer's senate seat.

Mr. Villaraigosa is the Hispanic with the widest name recognition in California, but likability is a problem. In a recent poll, more than six in 10 respondents could identify him, but unfavorable impressions of him were twice as high as for Kamala Harris. When the best thing a veteran political analyst has to say about your campaign bid is that "it would not have been a suicide mission by any stretch of the imagination," it's time to fold up your tent and go home.

California Hispanics can all rest easier though, because Republican John Estrada from Fresno has declared his candidacy and filed the necessary paperwork with the Federal Elections Commission. And even if he is an unknown Republican, he will beat Ms. Harris for senate in Tulare County.

### The Trial Balloon

On the subject of the California senate seat, it was front page news in *The Fresno Bee* that Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin would not be running. Hello? The *Valley Voice* broke that news weeks ago in Political Fix. Ms. Swearengin made it clear, when Ms. Boxer announced that she would not run for office again, that she did not want to be a legislator. Ms. Swearengin did say she was definitely going to run for office sometime in the near future. Seeing as I don't think she is going to run for dog catcher, that only leaves Governor.

So why did Ms. Swearengin want to be elected State Controller in 2014? That's not exactly an executive position. The answer is that she didn't. Her campaign for Controller was a trial balloon for her eventual run for governor. In 20/20 hind sight one can see that she didn't exactly kill herself campaigning and didn't even bother putting a statement in the voter's guide mailed to all registered voters. She did manage to show up to all of the Republican gatherings in order to get her name known and test her electability.

In that sense, she did extremely well and was probably the happiest loser on record election night. That explains why she wasn't afraid of the repercussions of not endorsing Neel Kashkari for governor. So what if she lost votes for controller because she wouldn't blindly support the Republican slate? Who wants that dead-end office anyway? Besides, he pissed her off with his Fresno homeless stunt. By the time she is running for governor, he will probably be back in Washington and no one will remember. (Except me.) As for endorsing Henry Perea, Ms. Swearengin's can kiss her dream of being governor goodbye without Democratic support.

Seeing as her most likely Democratic opponent will be former Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa, I don't think that support is going to be that hard find.

### VTD

Working on a Saturday night is one of my favorite things to do. Sometimes, before wrapping up work, I'll text Cole Azare, chief of staff for Assemblyman Devon Mathis, who also seems to work every Saturday night. I'm usually in a jovial mood and found it particularly funny that last December the *Visalia Times-Delta* (VTD) was still listing Connie Conway as the assembly representative three weeks after Mr. Mathis was sworn into office. Mr. Azare didn't seem as amused, but he tried to be a good sport.

By January, the VTD was still listing Ms. Conway as the assembly member. So I thought I would help our daily paper out and put all of Mr. Mathis' contact information in my column for the VTD to conveniently copy and paste on to their editorial page. I thought that was pretty amusing also. Mr. Azare was losing his sense of humor about the whole thing.

When I finally got a hard copy of the *Valley Voice* in my hands, I couldn't wait to re-read my column and chuckle thinking of the VTD editor or publisher seeing my excerpt. But after seeing Ms. Conway's name again listed as Tulare County's assembly member on February 25, it didn't seem so funny anymore. For one, I felt a twinge of sympathy for Mr. Azare and Mr. Mathis. Second, I was pretty pissed that the powers that be at the VTD actually don't read the *Valley Voice*. They always said they didn't, and now I guess they were telling the truth.

Then, in last week's VTD, I finally put two and two together and realized the editor and publisher don't read the *Valley Voice* because they don't live here. They may not even know we exist! That explains why the VTD editorial page doesn't know of Assemblyman Devon Mathis' existence either. But that was no excuse to Mr. Azare, who had this to say. "In a democratic society it is important for the public to have accurate information on who their elected officials are. I encourage the *Visalia Times-Delta* to update their information to reflect the results of the November 4th election."

Devon Mathis was elected on November 4, sworn in on December 2, and started working the first week of January. The VTD has had almost four months to get used to the idea that Ms. Conway is no longer our representative. So what gives?

What gives is that I do think the publisher was lying. I think former publisher Amy Pack did read the *Valley Voice*. As for Assemblyman Mathis? Maybe he can write a letter to the editor.

### Central Valley Republicans Hold Minority Leadership Positions in Sacramento

It was always a point of pride for Tulare County that Assemblywoman Connie Conway was the leader of the Republican Party in the assembly. Since her departure, lawmakers from the Central Valley have continued to be elected to leadership positions in both the assembly and senate. Tulare County is back in the forefront with Senator Jean Fuller appointed as minority leader of the state senate. She replaced Sen. Bob Huff of Diamond Bar. Her 16th Senate District is one of the largest in California and includes Visalia, Tulare and Exeter. Ms. Fuller will be the first woman to lead the Republican Party in the senate. Assembly woman Kristin Olsen of Modesto replaced Ms. Conway as the minority leader in the assembly last summer.

Both Central Valley women face a slightly better environment than that with which Ms. Conway had to contend. Republicans are currently in the minority in both houses, but not a super minority as was the case in 2012-2013. The Democrats managed to lose their supermajority even before the midterm elections when a couple of their members got kicked out of office because of legal troubles, and they never regained it. Now, Republicans have a seat at the table. Democrats cannot pass legislation without Republican votes, giving Sen. Fuller and Assembly member Olsen bargaining power that Ms. Conway did not have.

One would tend to assume that these leadership roles would go to big city representatives where the votes and power reside. But they do not for a very simple reason. Los Angeles and San Francisco do not elect Republican representatives, thus there exists none from which to choose. When Republican Catharine Baker won an assembly seat in the Pleasanton, Walnut Creek area it was huge news.

Before Assembly member Conway, Mike Villes of Clovis was the minority leader and in 2008 the Senate Republicans elected Modesto's Dave Cogdill as their minority leader.

### Out-of-State Money Puts Plastic Bag Ban on Hold

In California there are more than 100 cities and towns that have passed ordinances banning the use of plastic bags. So it made sense last summer when Governor Brown signed a bill banning plastic bags statewide. According to the AP, "California was to begin pulling plastic bags out of checkout counters at large grocery stores such as Wal-Mart and Target this summer. The ban was scheduled to expand to convenience stores and pharmacies in 2016. The law does not apply to bags used for fruits, vegetables or meats, or to shopping bags used at other retailers. It allows grocers to charge a fee of at least 10 cents for using paper bags."

Other states are also considering the ban because plastic bags do extensive damage to our environment, killing the marine animals that ingest them. One report said that plastic bags could take as long as 1,000 years to biodegrade. Less than five percent of the estimated 14 billion single-use bags used in California each year are recycled; the rest go to landfills or end up causing problems in the environment.

Every poll shows that Californians want to ban plastic bags. But the plastic bag industry is trying to tell Californians otherwise and bought their way onto our ballot. The industry spent $3.2 million gathering signatures to put a referendum on our ballot to overturn the bill. Ninety-eight percent of that money came from out of state.

The Secretary of State's office announced that the trade group American Progressive Bag Alliance submitted at least 110% of the 504,760 verified signatures it needed to qualify its measure to overturn the plastic bag ban. The referendum will be on the November 2016 ballot.

California's first-in-the-nation bill is now on hold until the next election, when the measure is predicted to fail and the ban will be reinstated. But for the next 16 months the plastic bag industry is free to trash our state and billions more plastic bags will invade our environment.

# PERB

Continued from p. 1

who were denied flex promotions and/or merit step increases that had been expressly promised them in a labor contract in 2011.

Service Employees International Union, Local 521 had signed an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) from August 1, 2009 through July 31, 2011 covering employees in five SEIU-represented bargaining units. Just weeks after the MOU went into effect--or on or about August 26,2009--Tulare County laid off about 55 employees. They claimed a $2 million cut to their budget.

Public Employment Relations Board
PERB

Subsequently, Tulare County proposed furloughs and suspended step and merit increases for its newest employees. SEIU agreed but asked for two years instead of one with an understanding the new employee's would not receive retroactive pay, but when the steps and merit were reinstated in 2011 they would be reset to the level they should have been if they had never been frozen.

On or about October of 2011, Tulare County ended the furloughs that had been imposed but the county refused to reset the merit and step increases to new employees that it had agreed to. Four years ago SEIU filed PERB charges against Tulare County. PERB ruled against Tulare County. PERB has now stated Tulare County must pay back the deserved one time promotions and wage increases, plus 7% interest accrued from August of 2011.

According to the Notice to Employees Posted by Order of the Public Employment Relations Board

after a hearing in Unfair Practice Case, Service Employees International Union, Local 521 v. County of Tulare, it has been found that the County of Tulare (County) violated the Meyers-Milias Brown Act (MMBA), and committed an unfair practice by failing and refusing to meet and confer in good faith with the Service Employees International Union, Local 521 (SEIU) and unilaterally repudiating the terms of Addenda Band C of the County's 2009-2011 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SEIU.

The county will cease and desist from:

1. 1. Failing and refusing to meet and confer in good faith with SEIU by unilaterally imposing provisions that impair the vested rights of employees to flex promotions and merit step increases as set forth in the expired 2009-2011 MOU between the County and SEIU.
2. 2. Denying SEIU rights guaranteed by the MMBA to represent employees.
3. 3. Interfering with the rights of employees of the County to form, join and participate in the activities of employee organizations of their own choosing for the purpose of representation on all matters of employer-employee relations.

And, will take the following affirmative actions designed to effectuate the policies of the MMBA:

1. Restore the prior status quo by rescinding the unilaterally imposed freeze on flex promotions and merit step increases, as set forth in the County's Personnel Rules, and as incorporated by reference in Addenda Band C of the parties' expired 2009-2011 MOU.

2. Make whole the affected employees in flexible classifications by adjusting employee classifications and pay rates to the classification level and pay rate that would have occurred under the County's Personnel Rules in the absence of Addenda B and C of the parties' expired 2009-2011 MOU, and by granting employees such merit step increases as would have occurred under the County's Personnel Rules iri the absence of Addenda Band C of the parties' expired 2009-2011 MOU, with interest at seven (7) percent per annum accruing from the first payroll period following expiration of the 2009-2011 MOU.

The official notice will remain posted publicly for at least 30 days.

# What Does Menudo Have To Do With The Vietnam Memorial Wall Campaign?

**Sherry Chavarria**

This past weekend's fundraiser brought in $1,000 towards the purchase of the Vietnam Veterans' Wall Replica (VVWR).

The menudo breakfast held on March 1, 2015 at the Dinuba Memorial Hall was a sellout! The American Legion Dinuba Post 19/Vietnam Wall Project Committee, in association with one of their sub-committees, Soft Thunder Riders M/C, hosted the fundraiser for the construction of a Vietnam Veterans' Replica Wall that will be permanently installed at the Dinuba Veterans' Memorial Building.

Romelia Castillo

Romelia Castillo, Chairwoman of the Vietnam Memorial Wall Committee, had a vision to bring a replica of the Vietnam Memorial Wall to our county and give it a permanent home in Dinuba.

Castillo and other committee members have been traveling to neighboring towns attending social meetings, mixers and local newsrooms to get the word out. They are currently working on a web page and a Facebook page where donations can be made through a secure online system.One-hundred percent of the funds go to the purchase of the Wall. Any size donation will be accepted and are tax deductible through the American Legion Alta Post 19's -5013C.

The American Legion Alta Post 19 is a non-profit entity that has pledged to raise $177,000 to purchase the Wall with the help of the Vietnam Memorial Wall Committee, co-committees and Dinuba residents. The first goal of $20,000 was made as the down payment, and on March 1 another $20,000 payment was added. Starting June 1, quarterly payments of $35,000 are to be made until the balance is paid in full. It is up to the rest of us to continue to meet these financial goals as we honor our soldiers who laid down their lives for our freedom. The 53,383 Vietnam Veterans' names will be listed on this wall. These 58,383 soldiers died; please help us to never forget them.

On March 7, Romelia Castillo and Ruth Padilla will have an information table setup at the Chinese New Year Celebration and parade on F Street (China Town) in Fresno. On March 15, the Soft Thunder Riders MC is coordinating over 100 motorcyclists who will escort the Wall to its home at the Dinuba Veterans' Memorial Building. The timeframe is still pending. Chairwoman Castillo and VVM Committee member Padilla are working closely to have local officials, as well as political officials from Sacramento and Washington D.C., to be on board for the christening of the Wall.

It has been my recent experience that nearly everyone I talk to about the Wall has a loved one or a friend whose name is carved there. Yet few, if any, have ever been able to make the long trip to Washington to pay their respects. I get choked up knowing that a community such as ours cares enough to bring The Wall of Healing home. As a Visalia resident and business owner, I am co-coordinating a fundraiser in Visalia late spring with hopes to meet the $35,000 installment due on June 1.

# Grand Jury: A More Proactive Approach to Recruiting

This year the Grand Jury has opted to take a much more proactive approach to recruiting applicants to serve on subsequent Grand Juries, beginning with the Grand Jury which will be empanelled for the July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016 term. This proactive approach consists of making presentations to civic/service clubs such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Optimists and Lions as well as senior citizens organizations, church groups...basically, anywhere in which people with an interest in the duties and functions of a Grand Jury may be gathered. This recruitment effort is intended to enhance citizen awareness of the role of a civil grand jury and inspire interest in service on the Tulare County Grand Jury.

We are a civil grand jury. As such, we do not investigate criminal offenses and we do not return indictments. Our duties involve responding to citizens complaints, conducting Jury Initiated Investigations and doing research preliminary to the submission of the Grand Jury's annual report.

The woman who serves as Secretary to the Tulare County Grand Jury is named Annette Jones and the office telephone number is: 624-7295.

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# Legal Petition Pushes Gov. Brown for Emergency Fracking Moratorium after Oil Waste Dumped into Aquifers

**Staff Reports**

After California officials admitted allowing hundreds of oil industry disposal wells to illegally inject wastewater into protected aquifers, more than 150 environmental and community groups filed a legal petition today pushing Gov. Jerry Brown to use his emergency powers to place a moratorium on fracking and other well stimulation techniques. The groups point to tests showing dangerously high levels of cancer-causing benzene in fracking flowback fluid, which is often dumped into California injection wells.

"Millions of Californians living near oil and gas wells face grave health and safety threats from fracking and all phases of the oil and gas production process," the groups wrote in a formal legal petition delivered to Gov. Brown's office. "The oil industry is polluting our air, contaminating our aquifers, using dangerous chemicals near homes and schools, increasing earthquake risk by injecting vast quantities of wastewater into disposal wells near active faults, and speeding climate change. These harms and risks pose an emergency and must be halted immediately."

The legal petition was submitted under the state Administrative Procedure Act, which requires the governor to respond within 30 days. It comes on the heels of the largest anti-fracking rally in history, when 8,000 protesters gathered in Oakland earlier this month.

"Gov. Brown can and should act immediately to protect California's precious water supplies from benzene-laden fracking fluid," said Hollin Kretzmann, an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity. "Oil companies are illegally contaminating our aquifers during a devastating drought. Fracking also pollutes our air and worsens climate change. Our state suffers more damage every day the governor continues allowing fracking to contaminate our air and water."

Environmental, health and community-based group leaders from all corners of the state have signed the petition on behalf of their organizations. Supporting organizations include Breast Cancer Action; the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment; Greenpeace; 350.org; Physicians for Social Responsibility-San Francisco; California Environmental Justice Alliance; Earthworks; CREDO; Public Citizen; Alliance of Nurses for a Healthy Environment; and the Center for Environmental Health.

In recent weeks, the magnitude of the emergency has become clearer. California state officials admitted that hundreds of disposal wells are illegally injecting oil industry waste water into scores of protected aquifers, including some with water clean enough for drinking and irrigation. That means California's water is being contaminated in the midst of one of the worst droughts on record. The oil industry is also operating hundreds of illegal wastewater disposal pits that pose water and air-pollution risks.

Fracking flowback fluid is a key part of the oil industry wastewater stream, and recent oil industry tests of this fracking flowback have found dangerously high levels of cancer-causing benzene and hexavalent chromium, in addition to other harmful chemicals. Average benzene levels were about 700 times the federal limit for drinking water.

"Cancer-causing chemicals like benzene have no place in California's water supply," said Karuna Jaggar, executive director at Breast Cancer Action. "These chemicals harm the health of current and future generations. Governor Brown needs to step up and halt fracking immediately."

"Oil companies are fracking near homes and schools, and it's time for Gov. Brown to end this terrible threat to public health," said Juan Flores, a Delano-based organizer with the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment. "People in the Central Valley have suffered from fracking pollution for far too long. The governor needs to protect our air, our water, and our communities by halting fracking."

"Gov. Brown has gone too far," said Zack Malitz, campaign manager at CREDO. "It is unbelievable that Gov. Brown allowed the oil industry to break the law and inject poison into our aquifers. Gov. Brown will go down in history as the leader who poisoned Californians' water in a giveaway to oil companies if he doesn't stop fracking and all illegal injection wells immediately."

Numerous scientific studies have linked fracking and other unconventional extraction methods to environmental damage and health problems, including cancer, birth defects, and other serious illnesses. The state of New York recently banned fracking after an exhaustive review by the state health department found that the method poses unacceptable risks to the environment and human health.

## Water Regulations Change in March

Stage 4 water regulations for all City residents change to the Spring schedule beginning on Sunday, March 1.

During March and April, there is one watering day: Saturday for odd addresses and Sunday for even addresses. The watering times remain the same throughout the year: water before 10 am or after 8 pm on your designated water day.

There is an exception to the schedule for hand-watering shrubs, trees, or vegetables. These can be watered any time with a watering can or with a hose with a positive shut-off nozzle. The hose cannot be left unattended and watering of lawns outside of the watering schedule is prohibited. Washing down sidewalks, driveways, etc., is also not allowed.

For more tips on how to conserve water, go to www.gogreenvisalia.com.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Odd | None | None | Sat | Sat | Tue Sat | Tue Thu Sat | Tue Thu Sat | Tue Thu Sat | Tue Thu Sat | Tue Sat | Sat | Sat |
| Even | None | None | Sun | Sun | Wed Sun | Wed Fri Sun | Wed Fri Sun | Wed Fri Sun | Wed Fri Sun | Wed Sun | Sun | Sun |

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# New Roundabout Construction To Begin

**Nancy Vigran**

Roundabouts are nothing new, but their popularity in Tulare County is continuing to grow. Lindsay has one, so does Porterville. And Exeter has one of a little different variety, as cars there must stop before entering it. This spring, roundabouts are scheduled to be started in Woodlake and Farmersville.

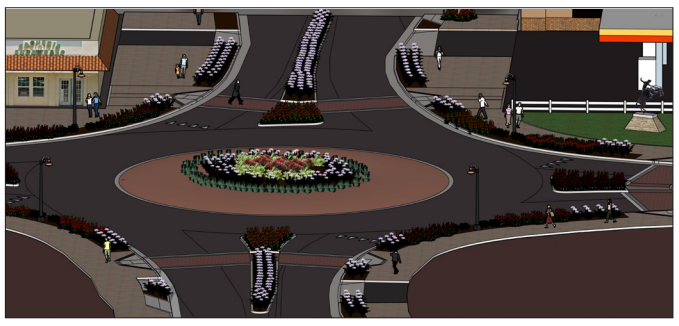
"Roundabouts have two big advantages," said Ted Smalley, executive director of the Tulare County Association of Governments. "The largest is safety."

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 90% less fatal accidents occurred where a roundabout was installed, rather than other types of intersections, as revealed by the Transportation Research Board.

A 76% reduction in injury-causing accidents, and a 35% reduction in all crashes were found by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, according to the USDT, FHA.

Roundabouts eliminate left-hand turns, where statistically many accidents take place.

"The other (advantage) is the reduction of idling at intersections," Smalley said. A reduction which wastes less gas and lowers emissions into the air.



Woodlake roundabout, designated for the Naranjo and Valencia intersection.

Admittedly, roundabouts can take a little getting used to, he said. Vehicles in the roundabout itself, travel in a counter-clockwise pattern and have the right of way. Those entering the pattern must yield, much like entering a freeway.

The Woodlake roundabout is being built at the intersection of Naranjo and Valencia boulevards.

"Four-ways are dangerous," said Ramon Lara, Woodlake city manager.

The corner is not quite busy enough for a signal, but it needed something beyond on the stop signs, he said.

From 7 to 9am on weekdays, the intersection sees 1728 vehicles. From 4 to 6pm on weekdays, it sees 1891 vehicles.

With recent upgrades in design for the downtown area, a roundabout with the same features was a natural fit. Improvements surrounding the roundabout will include curbs, gutters, sidewalks and crosswalks matching the recent downtown theme.

The intersection, estimated to cost $4 million, includes engineering and environmental studies, purchase of some properties at the corner and construction, which alone is estimated at $2.95 million. The roundabout is funded through Measure R, sales tax for transportation improvement, and federal grant funds.

The city had to purchase right-of-way rights to nine properties, Lara said, all of which are completed or in escrow. Construction is still in the bidding process, but will close later this month, with the city council scheduled to vote and award the contracted at its March 23 meeting. A ground-breaking ceremony is scheduled for early April.

The project is estimated to finish by the end of the year. The intersection will remain open, for the most part, Lara said, with one-way traffic flow.

Farmersville is slated for not just one, but two roundabouts, to begin construction within a few months. One will manage traffic where Farmersville Boulevard and Noble Avenue meet; the other will be where the eastbound off and on ramps to Highway 198 meet Noble Avenue. Both areas are within city limits.

"It's been a several year process," said Mario Krstic, Farmersville police chief and interim city manager.

Krstic said the Farmersville intersections were on the tail end of Measure R fund projects, for rebuilding in the more traditional form with traffic lights, the estimate cost of which was close to $30 million. By switching to roundabouts, the timeline for actual start of construction was shortened and with a tremendous amount in savings, he said. Construction costs are now estimated at $5 million for both roundabouts, which should be going out to bid by early April with the plan for construction to start in May.

Preparation included very minimal right-of-way jurisdiction, Krstic said.

As in Woodlake, funding comes through Measure R and federal funds.

While construction for both Farmersville roundabouts will develop concurrently, work will switch back and forth to move forward and minimize problems for traffic during construction. The project is estimated to take one year.

"I believe we will see a reduction in accidents," Krstic said. "There will be a learning curve (for motorists using the roundabouts)."

Lindsay's roundabout at Elmwood Avenue and Hermosa Street was completed in 2010 as a part of the downtown revitalization project and features a historic windmill in the center. Porterville's Jaye Street roundabout at Montgomery Avenue was completed last year.

# Quad Knopf Wins Award for Bike/Pedestrian Project

**Staff Reports**

The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) recently presented Quad Knopf with a Local Motion award in the bike and pedestrian category for its work in downtown Woodlake.

Woodlake's Downtown Enhancement Project creates a more pleasing entrance into Woodlake's downtown business district through wider sidewalks, featuring colored concrete and brick pavers, ornamental lighting for improved mobility and safety for pedestrians, and decorative benches. Class II bike lanes were added, with striping and signage to enhance safety and broaden transportation choices for the residents of Woodlake.

New bulb-outs at intersections feature planters with flowering shrubs and narrow the roadway to allow safer pedestrian crossings. Along with new planters, 50 shade trees were installed to enhance the curb appeal of the downtown. A water-efficient irrigation system was designed to sustain the new landscaping.

The Downtown Enhancement project Phases 1-4 is the second phase of projects to be constructed in an Overall Downtown City Beautification Program. The first project, the Whitney Transit Center, increased the mobility of Woodlake's residents and enhanced the downtown area. The Downtown Enhancement Projects were made possible through federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds, Measure R and funding from the City of Woodlake.

"Quad Knopf was honored to be one of just two engineering firms chosen to receive a Local Motion award this year," noted President Michael Knopf, PLS, PE. "The downtown revitalization project allowed Quad Knopf to involve multiple disciplines, ranging from engineering to landscape architecture to utility coordination. We're proud to deliver a project that makes a significant difference for the people of Woodlake."

# George Runner Responds to Gas Tax Vote

George Runner today issued the following statement after a 5-0 Board of Equalization vote to reduce the state's gasoline excise tax rate by 6 cents, from 36 cents to 30 cents, effective July 1 of this year:

"This gas tax cut, although less than originally proposed, is still good news for overtaxed Californians, who currently pay both higher gas prices and higher taxes than residents of other states.

"Today's vote stems from a confusing and complicated formula known as the 'gas tax swap.' The Legislature enacted the formula a few years ago in order to redirect more than a billion dollars of transportation funding elsewhere. Under the gas tax swap law, the Board must annually adjust the gas tax rate to guard against over collection of tax.

"State revenues from fuel taxes reached a record $8.7 billion last fiscal year. Today's vote will help correct the over collection of tax that is resulting from lower gas prices.

"But even after this tax cut takes effect July 1, Californians will continue to pay more gas taxes and fees than residents in nearly every other state. In fact, the Board's cut won't even fully offset the cost of a new 'hidden gas tax' that took effect January 1 to help fund high speed rail and other so-called anti-global warming efforts.

"Instead of raising taxes, lawmakers ought to use all of the dollars California drivers already pay at the pump, including the new hidden tax dollars, to improve our roads and eliminate congestion. In addition, we ought to invest more General Fund dollars in transportation as well."

Elected in November 2010 and re-elected in 2014, George Runner represents more than nine million Californians as a member of the State Board of Equalization. For more information, visit www.boe.ca.gov/Runner.

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# Hanford

Continued from p. 1

a variance," said City Manager Darrel Pyle.

In September, representatives of the retailer asked the city to allow an optometrist to practice at its planned location on East Lacey Boulevard, a move that would have required a conditional use permit, as current zoning ordinances do not allow medical practices outside the city's Downtown Commercial Zone. The request was denied, but others followed, prompting a new discussion on the current laws.

"There were other requests from businesses to develop outside the downtown area," Pyle told the assembly.

**Downtown Restrictions**

Specifically at issue is the restriction of certain kinds of businesses to the downtown area. As it stands, medical offices, theaters, furniture stores, banks and hotels may only operate downtown. The restrictions were put in place in the mid-1990s in an effort to draw additional commercial traffic to the city center, said Michael Semas, a Hanford CPA who served on the committee 25 years ago that recommended the zoning laws now in place.

"How can we drive traffic -- vehicles and foot -- into downtown?" Semas said the committee asked itself. "Most of it was rather successful. I know it looks petty."

Any perceived pettiness may stem from the intricate nature of the current zoning laws. As it stands, medical offices larger than 6,000 square feet require a conditional use permit to do business downtown, while furniture stores may only do business downtown or in Community Commercial Zones, except department stores, which can only give over 2,500 square feet of their space to furniture sales no matter where they are located. Movie theaters are restricted to downtown, except for the Cinemark 8 on Lacey Boulevard, which operates there with special permission, and hotel construction is only allowed downtown, unless developers are given special permission to build elsewhere. Full-service banks may only operate downtown, with variances allowed depending on whether space is available for them in that zone.

History and Controversy

"The zone codes have worked for all these years," said Bob Ramos, a member of a civil committee currently tasked with revising Hanford's General Plan. The current laws, he said, remade the city's downtown, causing those seeking to do business in Hanford to invest there and rebuild several historic landmark buildings. "Those are pillars of the downtown area."

The General Plan Committee, Ramos said, is still reviewing the data it has collected and needs more time to formulate a useful set of recommendations for the City Council before it acts.

"We're not done with the job yet," he said. "We've got a lot of talking to do so we can bring you better information."

Ramos said he believes the city should allow larger medical offices downtown, that the Cinemark 8 should be allowed a permanent permit to operate and that banks should be allowed to open satellite branches and ATM locations, provided they have an "anchor" location downtown.

He also questioned why the zoning issue has been repeatedly revisited by the council, asking if influence from city staff living outside Hanford and business interests not native to the area were driving the move for zoning changes.

"We've got these people coming from Visalia wanting to change our downtown," Ramos said.

**Changes Coming Quickly**

Ramos was not alone in saying the changes were coming too quickly or in suspecting they would not be in the best interest of Hanford's citizens. Glenda Dwyer, a member of the city's Citizens Advisory Committee, said the process was being unnecessarily rushed.

"I'm pretty upset about this coming to the Council so fast," she said, denying that the Committee had given their endorsement to any possible changes. "I don't believe it was and I don't believe the members believe it was."

Dwyer said the issue should have been put to rest with the Costco decision in September.

"I thought it was decided when Costco came in," she said. "I guess someone wants those changes."

Dwyer, however, agreed minor alterations to the zoning laws are needed, yet felt there was a lack of understanding of the current requirements.

"We might need to tweak the zones, but we need to take it on a case-by-case basis," she said. "I don't think people understand why the zones are there."

Shelly Talbert, a member of the Advisory Committee and the head of Main Street Hanford, also said proposing zone changes was premature. The Committee's questions, she said, had not been answered to its satisfaction.

"These proposals were kind of rushed through," she said.

**Investment Needed**

Dave Jones, former head of the now defunct Hanford Visitors Agency, said the downtown should be rejuvenated not by changing the zoning, but by maintaining its charm and encouraging businesses to occupy the 40 empty storefronts currently standing vacant.

"The sizzle is downtown," he said. "It's an organizational issue."

Jones said city-sponsored organizations currently tasked with fostering business downtown were taking the wrong approach. Instead of hosting one-time events designed to bring visitors, more emphasis should be placed on building investment in downtown infrastructure, as well as making sure the city's plans are in the best interest of current business operators. He cited a 15% occupancy rate for hotels as evidence new ones were not needed.

"Did anyone ask the hotel owners if we need another hotel?" Jones asked the Council. "It's not just about the events."

Hotel employee Sonya Cordero said she felt the call for new hotels was due to the increase in business experienced each year when attendance at the World Ag Expo causes hotels throughout the South Valley to sell out. Because of low occupancy the rest of the year, such a move could have the reverse effect.

"It would just kill the ones struggling to survive," she said. "There needs to be more planning when it comes to a hotel. We're not a tourist attraction."

Council to Discuss Change

Now that the citizenry has had its say, the next move will be up to the Council. Planned discussion for future Council meetings will include:

- Amending the Municipal Code to allow secondary uses within a business, such as allowing Costco to perform eye exams.
- Allowing medical offices larger than 6,000 square feet downtown.
- Allowing furniture store and theater operation outside downtown.
- Revising the city's definition of a hotel to allow food service.
- Amending the General Plan and Municipal Code to allow banks a second branch, provided they already operate one downtown.

# Teenage Opinion on Abortion

**Mercedes Oldenbourg**

For most teenagers, abortion is a very sensitive topic. Some are not even open for discussion about it. But everyone has an opinion, and it sometimes seems as if teenagers have the strongest ones. I talked to some kids at Exeter Union High School (EUHS) about it. The information I collected was astonishing to me.

Some took offense that one would even bring up the topic, and didn't want to talk about it. Others were rather happy to do so, and were strong in sharing their opinions. So what exactly did they say? They said some pretty outstanding things.

One girl, a sophomore at EUHS, was strongly against it.

"Abortion does not make you un-pregnant, it makes you the mother of a dead baby."

Pretty deep for a 15-year old.

A freshman girl said, "The second that egg is fertilized, it is a living, breathing human. By aborting, they're taking away a person's chance to live, and if they made the choice to have unprotected sex in the first place, they can at least have the decency to go through the child birth."

But, another sophomore girl said, "I think you shouldn't have to kill a human being because you made a mistake."

Over all, most teenagers believe abortion is a terrible thing. But what do those kids who are for it think? Also pretty outstanding opinions.

"People should be able to choose what they do with their bodies as our rights to bodily autonomy," said a fourth girl.

Another who also chose to stay anonymous, but was allowed to be described as a 17-year old male, said, "Abortion is the woman's choice, everyone has their opinion, but in the end the only person's opinion that matters is the mother's. We do not have the right to decide for someone else, we do not control their lives."

So, teenage opinion on abortion is pretty deep. Considering the difficulties of even getting someone's opinion, there is a lot of variety of thinking in today's teenage society. But this will be a topic that will forever be debated.

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## California Treasurer John Chiang Coming to Visalia

Newly elected California State Treasurer John Chiang will be the featured speaker at the Inaugural Roosevelt Gala on Saturday, March 28 at the Visalia Convention Center. The Gala will include a dinner catered by the Marriott Hotel and a variety of music and entertainment. There will be brief addresses by two honorees, renowned community activist and former Tulare County Supervisor Lali Moheno, and Visalia attorney Joe Altschule, who pens the progressive perspective of the biweekly Point/Counterpoint political column in the Visalia Times-Delta. Long-time Democratic raconteur Victor Moheno will MC the event.

John Chiang

As State Controller, Chiang was known as a reformer who transformed the Controller office into a governmental watchdog guarding taxpayer money. In 2008, during a budget dispute between Governor Schwarzenegger and the legislature, the Governor ordered all State employees to be paid the minimum wage instead of their actual salaries. Chiang defied the Governor's order and sided with the 200,000 state workers by invoking his constitutional authority to pay the employees their due wages. Chiang's action saved California millions of dollars of interest and fees, as well as protecting the livelihoods of thousands of California families.

The state Treasurer is California's chief banker and money manager. The Treasurer oversees all of the state's cash savings, debt and investments. This will be the first opportunity for Central Valley residents to hear from Chiang about his plans as Treasurer. VIP Gala tickets are available for those who want to speak personally with Treasurer Chiang and the two honorees at a special reception before the main event.

The Inaugural Roosevelt Gala is sponsored by the Tulare County Political Action Committee, TCPAC, founded to raise funds to advance voter registration, education and participation in the Central Valley. The event is supported by Visalia and Tulare Democratic Clubs and the College of the Sequoias Young Democrats, with help from the Kings County Democratic Central Committee.

Tickets are $75 and may be purchased online www.actblue.org/rooseveltgala2015 or the Facebook site Inaugural Roosevelt Gala2015. For information on tickets and sponsorship, contact TCPAC Chair Abigail Solis, (661) 586-5324.

## Sky Falling: City of Visalia to Consider Legalizing Ownership of Chickens

At the March 2 Visalia City Council meeting, Councilmember Amy Shuklian started the evening by saying that she had been getting many calls about chickens. It seems that people living within the city limits want to be able to legally own chickens at their homes. Shuklian suggested that the city staff research a possible chicken ordinance so that the council could take it under consideration.

Mike Olmos advised that if this is something in which the council is interested, they need to take a vote. If approved, Olmos could then research into other cities' chicken ordinances and see if any would work for Visalia. Olmos suggested that he present his findings during a work session and then bring the matter back to the council.

Councilman Collins said that the city was in luck because he has "chicken ordinance" on his resume. As a professional city planner he helped write the current ordinance used by Exeter. An ordinance was passed by the Exeter City Council in 2013. Many Exeter families raise chickens for the eggs, dinner, and also for Future Farmer's of America competitions. Some people also own chickens as pets. The Exeter decision took three months of debate before finally gaining approval. A maximum of 10 chickens are allowed per residence and roosters are banned.

Shuklian made a motion to ask the city staff to research a chicken ordinance. It passed 4 -1 with Mayor Steve Nelsen voting no.

After the meeting, Nelson explained why he voted against the motion. "I feel the same way about chickens that I feel about cats," referencing the destruction and mess these seemingly innocuous pets make.

He then added, "But, I like Kentucky Fried Chicken as much as anyone else," about which he said he was just kidding.

"Don't put that," he said. "I'll get hammered." To which I assured him I would not.

## RACA Encourages Action on Trade with Cuba

The Rural and Agriculture Council of America (RACA) supports efforts to increase and expand US agriculture's market access and trade. In an effort to expand upon existing and potential market access, RACA has joined the United States Agriculture Coalition for Cuba (USACC). RACA will work with agricultural, business, and community leaders to re-establish market and trade access between markets in Cuba and the US.

USACC's primary purpose is to "re-establish Cuba as a market for US food and agriculture exports," and includes a broad range of interests from within the US agricultural community.

RACA President Jack Alexander commented on the importance of opening trade with Cuba and recent legislation introduced on the issue, "The normalization of trade with Cuba will provide significant benefits to both America's and Cuba's rural and agricultural economies. As one of our closest neighbors, Cuba is a natural market for US agricultural exports as was evident before the embargo, when the United States was Cuba's largest agricultural trading partner. Cuba's population of 11 million currently faces issues of food security and affordability, indicating a high potential for growth in demand.

"This is a great opportunity for rural citizens in both countries to work together to improve food security and rural economies in Cuba and the US. The Freedom to Export to Cuba Act of 2015, recently introduced by Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Mike Enzi (R-WY), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Richard Durbin (D-IL), is a positive step in the effort to expand trade to Cuba. The legislation repeals several outdated provisions that currently limit trade, including necessary access to available credit. RACA urges swift passage of this bill."

Alexander will join other members of USACC next month on what has been deemed a "learning journey" trip to Cuba. Alexander commented on the coalition, "The agricultural community is most effective when acting as a united voice. USACC provides RACA with an opportunity for rural America to have a seat at the table on this important topic. I look forward to representing the rural and agricultural sectors of our country on the upcoming trip and learning more about Cuba and its potential as a trade partner to the U.S."

"The opening of trade, investment, and travel opportunities between the US and Cuba will be a momentous milestone between our two countries. RACA will continue to engage on this issue to ensure that both agriculture and small rural businesses in both countries can thrive in a global market place."

## First 5 Accepting Grant Applications

To further fulfill its mission to enhance the early development of Tulare County's children, the First 5 Tulare County Commission has released a Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP includes a total of $600,000 for one-time capital projects and planning grants.

A Question and Answer Forum to orient applicants will be held on March 11 at the Holiday Inn, 9000 W. Airport Dr. Visalia, in the Cedar Room at 2:00pm. This is not mandatory.

The Commission seeks proposals from organizations that serve Tulare County's pregnant women and children zero through five years of age. The RFP includes application guidance for both Capital Project and Planning Project components.

The Capital Project Grant program provides funding to purchase items with a value greater than $5,000 or to fund building renovation or construction projects which promote enhanced mental and physical health among children or ensure that children are ready for school and families are able to promote their children's development.

The Planning Grant Program is intended to foster collaboration and service integration among existing organizations. Planning outcomes are intended to 1) lead to expanded or enhanced services, lead to implementation of promising or innovative new services, or that promote initiatives addressing health needs of young children and pregnant women, or 2) ensure that children are ready for school and families are able to promote their children's development.

Applications can be downloaded at www.first5tc.org, or copies obtained by contacting the First 5 Commission office located at 200 N. Santa Fe Street, Visalia, CA. 93292. Proposals are due April 10, and projects will commence on July 1.

For questions, contact the First 5 office at 559-622-8650.

## HSRA Utilizes Top Traffic Tool for Construction

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is partnering with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to utilize their QuickMap system to alert the public and public safety officials of construction-related roadway impacts.

QuickMap, launched in 2011, allows drivers to plan ahead and reach their destinations faster by providing them with real-time traffic and travel information. QuickMap visitors can also monitor traffic congestion, California Highway Patrol incidents, Amber Alerts, travel time information, and lane closures due to highway roadwork.

"We're pleased that the Authority has added their construction activities into QuickMap," said Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty. "Motorists will be able to use this information to make smart travel decisions, which ultimately reduces congestion and pollution while increasing safety."

While the initial focus of the high-speed rail program construction is in the Central Valley, the Authority will use QuickMap for all roadways across the state. Visitors to the online interactive travel map can access nearly 1,000 freeway cameras and more than 700 electronic message signs on highways statewide. Other helpful features of the service include chain control information and statewide freeway displays that are color-coded based on speed. This tool is also frequently used by media organizations to broadcast travel and commute information.

To access Caltrans QuickMap, visit the Caltrans site at quickmap.dot.ca.gov.

# Ports

Continued from p. 1

month, the organization reported the state had lost 25% of its export opportunity.

"We're hoping things can get cleared out in time for us to salvage part of the late navel crop and possibly the beginning of the Valencia crop," Severns said.

Operations at Border Valley Trading, which exports hay, also remain unchanged, said company President Greg Braun. He noted his company, which has operations in the Imperial and Central valleys, currently has a backlog of 400 containers that are still waiting to be shipped.

"I don't think people realize how big the logjam is—how many containers that are sitting loaded that need to move and/or how many containers that are sitting offshore with ships that need to come in," Braun said. "That all needs to happen first before industry can move on to what we call new business."

Because of delays in shipping his products, Braun said he has lost some of his customers, who ended up buying hay from other countries. His concern now, he added, is what his business profile will look like once the logjam clears at the ports and whether demand for his products will return.

Carissa Sauer, spokeswoman for the Almond Board of California, said economic damage from the port slowdown has varied among the state's handlers, with some experiencing delays while others have reported sales losses in the millions of dollars and even some temporary layoffs.

About 70% of the state's almonds are exported, with 80% of those exports departing from the Port of Oakland, the board said.

It is expected to take a few weeks before the respective sides of the labor dispute ratify the tentative agreement that was reached, said Jock O'Connell, an international trade economist based in Sacramento. In the interim, the agreement calls on both sides to continue to operate the ports as efficiently as they can, he added, "and right now that means digging themselves out of a pile of containers."

What could further complicate the backlog is when cargo volumes begin to pick up during the spring, which is traditionally an accelerated time for trade and a peak period for container movements through the ports, O'Connell added.

About two-thirds of U.S. beef and pork exports, which are shipped either frozen or chilled, rely on ocean freight, out of which nearly 80% exit the country through West Coast ports, said Joe Schuele, spokesman for the U.S. Meat Export Federation.

While shelf life for frozen meat is not a great concern, he said, exporters of chilled meat, which has greater value, have had to freeze their product in order to extend its shelf life, and that meat will have to be sold at a deep discount.

He noted some exporters have had to use air freight to deliver critical orders and help retain key customers, "but this is very expensive and is not a viable, long-term option for shipping large volumes to Asia."

Jim Geller, president of Geller International, a San Mateo County importer and exporter who works with manufacturers, processors and suppliers of beef, poultry, dairy products, produce and other foods, said while he has not had to divert too much product to other ports, with one poultry company he represents, he is now moving a container to New Jersey in order to avoid the delays on the West Coast. His suppliers in the Midwest also are saying they're starting to route traffic to other states, he added.

Meanwhile, Solano County-based Superior Farms, which markets lamb, has encouraged retailers who currently buy imported lamb and have product stuck at West Coast ports to start buying its products. The company announced it is extending special "Easter pricing" to new customers in hopes that they will switch to carrying American lamb, said Lesa Eidman, director of producer resources and sustainability for Superior Farms.

"Obviously, there's a lot of product sitting at the ports that hasn't been able to come in that many retailers typically have imported," she said. "When that product isn't available, then retailers that want to keep lamb in the stores will hopefully switch over to an American product, which is a benefit to all of the local producers here in the U.S."

*Reprinted with permission from the California Farm Bureau Federation.*

## ASSEMBLYMAN DEVON MATHIS APPLAUDS THE RECENT RESOLUTION OF WEST COAST PORTS LABOR DISPUTES, BUT CAUTIONS AGAINST FUTURE DISRUPTIONS

Assemblyman Devon Mathis (R-Visalia) issued the following statement in response to the resolution of the labor dispute between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and their employer Pacific Maritime Association, but cautioned against future port disruptions:

"The recent labor dispute between the ILWU and the Pacific Maritime Association jeopardized the productivity and livelihoods of not only countless farmers and agricultural workers throughout the Central Valley, but also every aspect of California's economy from trucking to retail. We cannot allow any one group to hold the entire state hostage during a contract negotiation," stated Mathis.

Mathis continued, "California has a rich history of supplying the world with top-quality fruits, vegetables and other agricultural products. This dispute put our struggling agriculture industry in jeopardy of losing their vital export incomes. While I am pleased that the two parties were able to come to an agreement, we cannot let this happen again."

Assemblyman Mathis represents the people of Tulare, Inyo and Kern counties and serves as Vice Chair of the Veteran Affairs Committee and is a Member of Aging and Long-Term Care, Agriculture, and Water, Parks and Wildlife Committees.

## West Hills Coalinga Looking for Alumnus of the Year

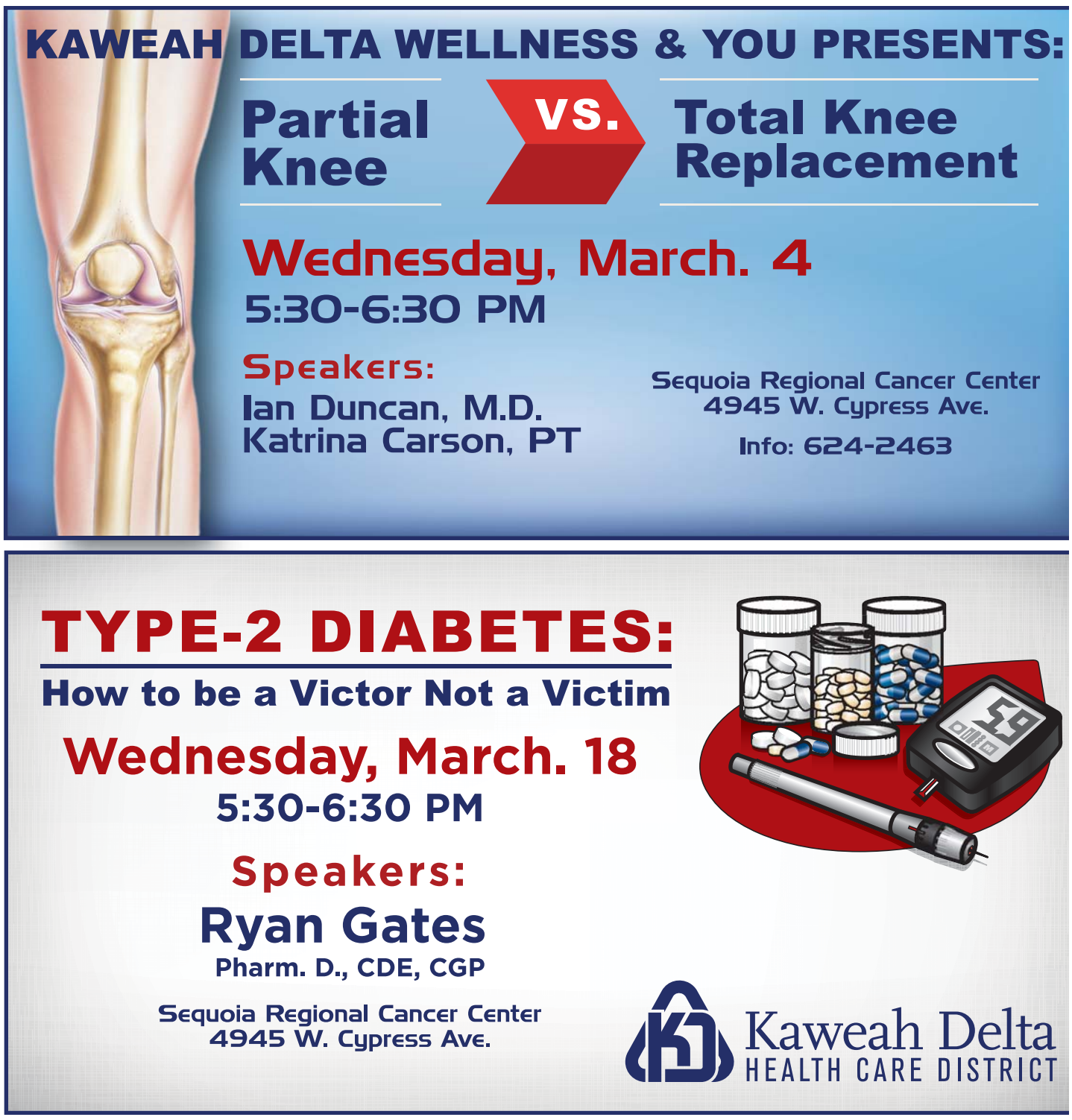
West Hills College Coalinga is looking for the next Alumnus of the Year, a former WHCC student who excels personally and professionally.

The Office of the President will accept nominations until 5pm on March 20. Nomination forms can be picked up in the Office of the President, 300 Cherry Lane, in Coalinga. The recipient will be notified no later than mid-April and will be presented with the award during May commencement.

To be eligible, nominees must meet certain criteria. Nominees must contribute significantly to their community, state or nation and must demonstrate an outstanding achievement in their profession. He or she must also demonstrate a high level of integrity. All nominees must have also completed at least one semester at WHCC but are not required to be graduates of the college.

Those who wish to nominate an alumnus must fill out the nomination form and include a written letter of no more than 300 words detailing why the nominee deserves the award. Additional information, such as a nominee's resume or press releases about their achievements, can also be included.

Last year's recipient was Michael Lynch, chosen for his achievements in theater arts. Nominate an alumnus today. Pick up the form on campus or download one online at http://www.westhillscollege.com/coalinga/announcements/alumnus.pdf.

## CSET To Offer Free Tax Preparation Services

Community Services Employment Training (CSET) is offering free tax preparation services to Tulare County families with a household income under $52,000. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program will operate through April 11.

More than 80 volunteers took a month-long course to become Internal Revenue Service certified tax preparers. The volunteers are trained to file taxes for the families and help them identify tax credits for which they are eligible. Common tax credits include the Earned Income Credit, Child Tax Credits, Child & Dependent Care Credit, Retirement Savings Contribution Credit, and Education Credits.

In 2014, CSET volunteers prepared 2,000 tax returns, which resulted in $2.6 million being returned to Tulare County.

The VITA program is available at four locations in Tulare County. Residents can visit an office in Cutler, Porterville, Tulare, or Visalia for assistance. All sites are open from 9am to 3pm on Saturdays through April 11. For information on services offered in Kings County, community members can contact Kings United Way at (559) 584-1536 or Kings Community Action Organization at (559) 582-4386.

Tax returns are prepared on a first-come, first-served basis. Taxpayers who file electronically will receive their return as direct deposit within 10-14 business days. Community members can also complete their own tax returns by visiting http://www.myfreetaxes.com/ or at any of the Facilitated Self-Assistance stations located in every VITA site.

"CSET is proud to offer the VITA program to Tulare County residents for the ninth year in a row," stated CSET's Executive Director Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner. "Tax preparation can cost upwards of $200. We look forward to putting families at ease with this free service."

Bank of the West, Wells Fargo, Best Buy, AT&T, United Way of Kings County, and Kings Community Action Organization have partnered with CSET to provide these services.

To view the full schedule of times and locations, visit www.cset.org/vita. Please call our VITA information hotline at (559) 741-4640 for office locations and a list of required documents.

## West Hills Colleges to Gain Full-Time Officers

**Nancy Vigran**

West Hills Colleges are beefing up campus security in Lemoore and Coalinga. Each campus will see a full-time police officer on campus in the near future.

While each has four to five security officers, whose shifts cover the campuses during class hours, sporting events and other activities, school officials and the board of trustees want to be proactive in keeping the campuses safe, said Dr. Frank Gornick, chancellor of West Hills College District. The presence of a uniformed police officer, they hope, will deter the potential for crime in general.

"We've had no spike in occurrence (of crime)," he said. "It has been a long-range goal to get more security on campus."

The Lemoore campus will soon have a full-time Lemoore Police Department officer. Likewise, the Coalinga campus will have a Coalinga Police Department officer. Each department is currently hiring an additional officer to fill these positions.

"This is a very inexpensive way to get a trained officer connected to each campus," Gornick said.

The security guards do not carry guns, nor can they arrest someone, said Deputy Chancellor Ken Stoppenbrink.

Currently, if one witnesses or falls victim to a crime, they contact the administration, which will contact an on-campus guard, as well as call the local police department. For any potential emergency situation, students, or anyone on campus, should call 9-1-1.

While this protocol will not change, the difference is that an onsite officer will answer more quickly and could potentially nab a perpetrator in the act.

Each campus is signing a three-year contract with their perspective local police departments. The colleges will each pay approximately $80,000 per year for the police officer, which includes the use of a police department vehicle. Each campus is providing an onsite office for the officer's use to write reports and perform other paperwork-related duties.

It is up to each college president and staff to determine what eight-hour shifts will be most beneficial to their campuses, in conjunction with their police department, Stoppenbrink said.

The district board of trustees had to approve the move, as did each city council.

"You hear about so much going on," Stoppenbrink said. "We just want to be proactive."

West Hills College in Lemoore serves more than 4,000 full and part time students, while the Coalinga West Hills College has an enrollment of approximately 6,800.

## FoodLink for Tulare County Announces Appointments

On February 24, FoodLink for Tulare County announced two new appointments to its Board of Directors. Janis Lehmann and Janie Sustaita were each elected to two-year terms.

"I am thrilled to welcome these compassionate professionals to the FoodLink Board of Directors," said Allen Broslovsky, Chairman, FoodLink for Tulare County Board of Directors. "Each brings experiences and insight to the conditions that FoodLink is working to address in our community."

Janis Lehmann is the chairperson of the Tulare County Youth Commission, a volunteer for Kaweah Delta Hospice, President-elect of the Tulare Sunrise Rotary and treasurer of the Center for Spiritual Living, as well as being a former member of the Tulare County Mental Health Board.

Lehmann, who considers herself a "farm girl" at heart, worked for over 30 years with at-risk youth as a special education teacher and school administrator.

Janie Sustaita is the sales and marketing manager for the California, Arizona and Nevada region of ImmuCell, a biotechnology company which works closely with animal health distributors, veterinarians, calf raisers, dairy producers and cow-calf operations.

Sustaita has over 20 years of experience in the agriculture industry and served as a field representative for Senator Andy Vidak, specializing in agricultural issues. Sustaita currently holds the position of second Vice President of California Women for Agriculture, is a member of Tulare County Cattlewomen, Tulare County Farm Bureau, and the Fresno State Ag One foundation.

"We know that Ms. Lehmann and Ms. Sustaita's contributions to the FoodLink for Tulare County Board of Directors will help further our mission as we prepare for an exciting future," added Broslovsky.

*Since 1978 FoodLink for Tulare County has been a locally operated not-for-profit food bank at the forefront of hunger-relief efforts in Tulare County.*

*The mission of FoodLink is to eliminate hunger for those in need by providing healthy food and nutrition education through community involvement. The food bank serves one in four Tulare County families by distributing food through a network of 34 emergency food pantries. In 2014, FoodLink distributed 7,446,776 million pounds of food to 111,717 families.*

## Fourth Round of Fire Fee Bills Begins Mailing

### *In Response, Runner Re-Affirms Support for Lawsuit, Sponsors Legislation*

Fire Prevention Fee bills for fiscal year 2014-15 began mailing yesterday to more than 700,000 rural Californians, many of whom are receiving a bill for the fourth time.

"It's extremely frustrating that a law this wrong continues to take money from the pockets of rural Californians year after year," said Runner. "This so-called 'fee' was put in place during a budget crisis that no longer exists. The Legislature could and should repeal it."

Approximately 10,000 bills will be sent each day in alphabetical order by county. The mailing schedule, available at calfirefee.com, is alphabetical by county, starting with Alameda County on March 2 and concluding with Yuba County on June 15.

To protect their eligibility for a refund, property owners should protest every billing by filing a new Petition for Redetermination within 30 days of the billing date. Information on how to appeal is available at www.calfirefee.com/appeal.

Runner re-affirmed his support for the pending class action lawsuit, as well as a full legislative repeal. Senator Mike Morrell (R-Rancho Cucamonga) recently introduced SB 198 to repeal the illegal tax.

In addition, Runner is sponsoring legislation to extend the time homeowners have to pay and appeal the Fire Prevention Fee. Two identical measures, AB 203 (Obernolte) and SB 250 (Gaines), would increase the payment due date of the Fire Prevention Fee from 30 days from the date of assessment to 60 days.

"The confusing and controversial fire fee is tax policy at its worst," said Runner. "It should be eliminated entirely, but until then these bills are a step in the right direction. Increasing the payment due date will help lessen the burden of this illegal tax on rural homeowners."

Due to the rural nature of those being billed, many property owners do not receive their fire fee bills in a timely manner. Although payment plans are available, many on fixed incomes are unable to pay their Fire Prevention Fee by the 30-day deadline.

"Problems with timely mail delivery can be an issue in mountain and rural areas of my Senate District," said Senator Gaines. "The current deadline does not allow residents in these communities nearly enough time to pay or protest their fire fee bills before they start accruing penalties. I hope my bill will provide some much-needed relief to these homeowners."

"The current deadline does not provide residents in rural communities nearly enough time to pay or protest their fire fee assessments," said Assemblyman Obernolte. "Ultimately, I am hopeful that the courts will find this fee illegal and strike it down, but in the meantime this bill will help provide much needed relief to these homeowners."

Elected in November 2010 and re-elected in 2014, George Runner represents more than nine million Californians as a member of the State Board of Equalization. For more information, visit www.boe.ca.gov/Runner.

## West Hills Cycling Event Set for March 21

The second annual West Hills Metric Century cycling event is coming to Coalinga again on March 21. The event will cover 61 miles or nearly 100 kilometers and will attract bicycle enthusiasts from Fresno and Kings counties.

"Now that this has become an annual event I want to see it grow as a fundraiser for scholarships and other student needs at the college," said Carole Goldsmith, West Hills College Coalinga president. An avid cyclist, she will again participate this year.

There is a shorter ride as well as a "fun" ride, and riders start and return at the West Hills College Coalinga campus, where they'll have lunch in the campus café. All proceeds from the event will benefit student programs at WHCC. The college is co-sponsoring the event with the Fresno Cycling Club.

Al Graves, WHCC instructor and an active member of the cycling club, is coordinating the event in Coalinga. The route will take riders up Los Gatos Creek Park Road, past the oil derricks and fields and through winding hilly terrain to the San Benito County line and back.

The "fun" ride will traverse the flat lands just north and west of the community of Coalinga, passing farm lands, oil fields, and the West Hills College Coalinga Farm of the Future with its new rodeo arena and stock facility. Riders in the mini-metric will venture an additional 13 miles up Los Gatos Creek Canyon to the County Park and back. Metric century riders will continue for 8 miles beyond the park and back.

"The last couple of miles of the ride before reaching the county line will offer some tough 8 to12 percent grades," said committee member Tom Kulikov.

This year members of student government—led by new cycling enthusiast and Associated Student Body President Ashlee Rocha—will conduct a companion "walk/run" event for students without bicycles or helmets.

WHCC will provide a secure "valet" bike service, three rest stops, and an after-ride meal which will feature tri-tip beef, chicken and a full salad bar served cafeteria-style. In addition, special gift bags will be given to the first 100 metric and mini-metric participants to register online. Approximately 20 additional prizes ranging from $20-$250 in value, including a dinner and overnight stay for two at Harris Ranch Inn and Restaurant, will be awarded as prizes in a drawing.

Online registration is now available and will continue until March 20. To register online, follow the link posted on the Fresno Cycling Club website at www.fresnocycling.com or go to http://www.westhillscollege.com/metriccentury/

Riders can also sign in at the event on March 21, from 8am to 10am, on the west side of the campus on Highway 198/33 on Elm Street. To facilitate those commuting from far away, the century ride will start at 9:00am, the mini-metric will begin at 9:30am, and the "fun ride" will start promptly at 10am. All riders must be on the road by 10am.

Full SAG support will be available until 3 p.m. while rest stops will be available until 2pm Lunch in the college café and patio will be available from 11:30am to 3pm, or later if required. Additional lunches for non-riders can be purchased for $12 each.

Fees to register for the event are: $45 for the 61-mile Metric Century ride; $35 for the 40-mile Mini-Metric ride; and $15 for the 17-mile Fun ride. Children accompanied by parents can participate in the 17-mile Fun ride only for a fee of $12

West Hills College Coalinga is located at 300 Cherry Lane in Coalinga, California. For further information, contact Al Graves by phone at (559) 934-2789 or (559) 284-0787 or email him at algraves@whccd.edu or anbgraves@msn.com.

Front row: nominated officers: Austin Slater, Treasurer; John Coffee, President; Joan Givan (Secretary). Back row: Political partners: Jose Sigala (SEIU), Ruben Macareno (TCDP), Raul Gonzalez (CTA), Fidel Banuelos (CTA).

## Stonewall Democrats Nominate Officers

The Stonewall Democrats of Tulare County nominated its four officers at its first general meeting on Monday, February 23 in Visalia. John Coffee was nominated president followed by Brock Neeley, Joan Givan and Austin Slater who were nominated vice president, secretary and treasurer respectively.

SDTC also had community organizing partners in attendance; Jose Sigala of SEIU, Ruben Macareno of the Tulare County Democratic Party and Raul Gonzalez and Fidel Banuelos of the California Teachers Association.

Among the items of business was the first reading of the Club's proposed bylaws, discussion of networking and working with other political entities for an equality agenda.

The group will meet on March 16 at 7pm at the TCDP office at 208 W. Main St., Suite K in Visalia. The nominated officers will be confirmed and the adoption of bylaws will be the highlight of the meeting.

For more information visit www.facebook.com/TCStonewallDems or email tcstonewalldems@gmail.com

Former Visalia Police Chief Colleen Mestas, at right, with a friend.

## Former Visalia Police Chief Mestas Undergoes Surgery

All of the *Valley Voice*'s thoughts and prayers were with former Visalia police chief Colleen Mestas as she underwent breast cancer surgery on March 3. The cancer was detected in late December during a routine mammogram. Mestas bought a retirement home close to her daughter in Simi Valley and opted to have her surgery in nearby Newport Beach. The first mammogram only detected one spot, but a further test detected two on her left side. Mestas also consulted with a plastic surgeon, and both surgeries took place on Tuesday.

Mestas' diagnosis came several months before she intended on retiring. Her plan was to retire at the end of this year, after her 50th birthday. She and her husband, retired Hanford police chief Carlos Mestas, were leasing a house in Visalia and had planned to let the lease run out and permanently move to Simi Valley. The breast cancer diagnosis prompted her to announce her retirement on January 23, a few months early.

Mestas started her law enforcement career as an Explorer for the Clovis Police Department. She then served as a Clovis Police Aide, a Clovis Dispatcher, and eventually a Fresno County Sheriff Reserve Officer prior to being hired as a full time deputy in 1988. Mestas started out her law enforcement career in Visalia as an assistant chief and was promoted to police chief in 2009.

Mestas has collected an impressive array of degrees along the way. According to an online biography written by the Fig Garden Home Owners Association, she holds a Bachelors of Arts degree in Organizational Behavior from the University of San Francisco and a Masters degree in Organizational Behavior from The California School of Professional Psychology. Mestas is also a graduate of the prestigious Senior Management Institute for Law Enforcement taught by Harvard University Scholars based in Boston, Massachusetts. While a deputy in Fresno, Mestas graduated from the Marion Bergeson series in public service and received certification from the Josephson Institute on ethics in law enforcement and police administration.

Mestas said she will be updating her Facebook for any and all well wishers.

## St. Patrick's Dixieland Jazz Concert March 14

Nationally acclaimed High Sierra Jazz Band and The Reedley River Rats team up Saturday, March 14, for a concert and traditional St. Patrick dinner in the Three Rivers Memorial Building on Highway 198. The public is invited. Admission is $10.

High Sierra Jazz Band

Celebrating in the best Irish tradition, there will be corned beef and cabbage with all the trimmings, including dessert, $15, prepared by Glen and Susan McIntyre, Gateway Restaurant and Lodge, at 1 o'clock. Music is continuous with the two bands alternating.

The Reedley River Rats are from Reedley High School. Stan Huddleston, President of the sponsoring Sierra Traditional Jazz Club says, "The River Rats are a professional grade youth traditional jazz band whose members have been to jazz camp on scholarships from our Club."

Dinner reservations may be made by calling Stan at 559-561-3321 or Sandy at 559-561-4264. Stan adds, "Wear your green, bring your dancing shoes and enjoy an afternoon of outstanding Trad Jazz sounds from the River Rats at 1 and at the break. High Sierra plays at 2 and after the break til 5."

High Sierra is the host band for the 42nd annual Jazzaffair in Three Rivers, April 10, 11 and 12. This is the oldest festival in the West. There are 13 bands from across the U.S. including The River Rats and four other California bands. For information check out www.jazzaffair.info or call 559-561-4549.

# Briefly...

## THE VISALIA CHAMBER EXPERIENCES MOMENTUM IN 2015

2015 started with a bang for the Visalia Chamber of Commerce. Since January 1 we have hosted 14 ribbon cuttings, 10 of those events happened in just the last 30 days. This is a great indicator that business is thriving in Visalia.

Whether it be a new business opening their doors for the first time, a current Chamber member expanding to a new location, or an existing business joining the Chamber for the first time, each of these instances suggests that the business community is continuing to grow stronger and values their partnership with the Visalia Chamber.

The Chamber is proud to support local businesses during all phases of their development. For new businesses the Chamber can help provide needed publicity and credibility. For expanding businesses the Chamber can bring increased awareness and new networking opportunities, and for all local businesses, the Chamber provides advocacy and a united voice for business on a local, state and federal level.

If there is a business looking for increased awareness, opportunities to get involved in the community, leadership training, and wants to have a voice in local advocacy efforts on behalf of business, the Chamber delivers on all fronts. Visit the Chamber website www.visaliachamber.org or call the Chamber, 559-734-5876 to learn more about how the Visalia Chamber can partner with you to help grow our local economy.

## SIERRA GRANT AWARDED TO THE BETHLEHEM CENTER AND PORTERVILLE SUMMER STRINGS

Bank of the Sierra is pleased to announce a Sierra Grant in the amount of $2,000 has been awarded to the Bethlehem Center, which prepares and serves more than 7,000 hot meals each month and also feeds more than 700 families per month from their food pantry. The center further provides clothes, laundry services, hygiene kits, AA and NA recovery services, pantry food boxes and serves as a cooling center in the summertime. The grant funds will be used toward purchasing a new Walk-In Cooler/Freezer Combo to replace their current food storage equipment that is no longer functioning.

Bank of the Sierra is also pleased to announce a Sierra Grant in the amount of $2,000 awarded to Porterville Summer Strings. Porterville Summer Strings provides an intensive musical experience for 4th through 12th grade students in Southern Tulare County by offering a one-week workshop led and conducted by talented, trained, ethnically diverse professional musicians from Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University. Students learn many skills including: reading music, counting rhythms, following directions, listening to oneself, listening to others, working together, practicing self discipline, patience, and confidence.

The Sierra Grant Program is designed to improve the quality of life for the families, especially the children, who reflect the diversity within Bank of the Sierra branch communities. The Sierra Grant Program is focused on three areas: community services, park preservation, and education. Anyone involved in a non-profit program, who may be interested in a Sierra Grant, can pick up an instructional brochure at any Bank of the Sierra branch, or visit the bank web site at www.bankofthesierra.com.

## ANNUAL SELMA SWAP SET FOR MARCH 7

The 9th annual Selma Swap, known as a "big boy toy" swap meet, will be held Saturday, March 7, at the Selma Flea Market.

The event features cars, boats, go-carts, new and antique car parts, motorcycle parts and more, along with food booths and a variety of collectibles.

The event is open to the public from 6am to 3pm and will be open, rain or shine. Parking is free; admission is $5 per person. Children 12 and under are admitted free of charge when accompanied by an adult.

Selma Swap is sponsored by the Reedley Blossom Trail A's. The Selma Flea Market is located at Highway 99 and Mountain View Avenue.

"This swap meet focuses on big boy toys like cars, motorcycles, watersport gear and parts for the do-it-yourself person," noted co-founder Alan Borba. "It's fun stuff for the men, but some of our vendors also offer antiques and collectibles. And the food is good!"

For directions and details, visit selmaswap.com or call 896-3243.

## 5K, KIDS RUN, FUN RUN RELAY & AGRICULTURE SHOWCASE

Exeter FFA invites you to join the Foothill Farm Run on April 25, 2015 at Exeter High School Football Stadium. The event will include a 5k Walk/Run, a Fun Run Relay and a Kid's Run followed by a carnival and agriculture showcase.

In the year 2050, the world's population is expected to reach 9 billion. In order to feed the growing population, farming will have to increase production 100% on diminishing available farm land. By creating awareness, we hope agriculture will remain a top priority in our state and community.

Through the Foothill Farm Run, Exeter FFA and it's run sponsors will:

- Increase understanding of the agriculture industry.
- Promote awareness of the scientific, economic and mechanical resources needed to produce a safe, reliable, and affordable food source.
- Promote healthy lifestyles.

"Learning to do, doing to learn, earning to live and living to Serve." One powerful sentence that culminates FFA, the premier national youth leadership organization. Exeter FFA is over 450 members strong. The Agriculture program aims to prepare students with technical skills in the agriculture industry, as well as build their leadership experiences.

Graduates from the Agriculture program go on to pursue careers inside and outside the agriculture industry, attend trade schools, universities and colleges. Proceeds from this event will be used to fund student scholarships to attend leadership & community service conferences, student led community service projects and other leadership activities.

We hope that you can join us on April 25, 2015 for fun, running and awareness.

## TULARE COUNTY WOMEN CONTRIBUTED TO VALLEY HISTORY

Women of Tulare County, an exhibit highlighting the contributions often Tulare County women, opens at the Visalia Library on Tuesday, March 10 to coincide with Women's History Month. This exhibit showcases these extraordinary women of Tulare County from 1855 to the present through a series of posters. Women featured include Josephine Allensworth, Anna Mills Johnston, Eleanor Calhoun, Ina Stiner, Annie Mitchell, Mary Garcia Pohot, Rose Ann Vuich, Jean Shepard, Lali Moheno, and Ester Hernandez.

This exhibit on display on the second floor of the Visalia Branch of the Tulare County Library outside of the Annie R. Mitchell History Room runs through June 4. Exhibit hours are from 1 -5pm, Tuesday to Friday. An opening reception will be held on Wednesday, March 11 from 6 -7:30pm in the Visalia Library's Blue Room. Women of Tulare County is presented by the Annie R. Mitchell History Room volunteers and staff.

For more information on this exhibit, please contact Lisa Raney at 713-2723 or the reference desk at 713-2703. The Visalia Library is located at 200 W. Oak Ave, Visalia, CA 93291.

The Tulare County Library serves all the citizens of Tulare County with locations in 15 communities, five book machines and an online presence at www.tularecountylibrary.org.

## FREE CAR EMISSIONS TEST AND DIAGNOSTIC INSPECTION EVENT TO BE HOSTED AT WHCL

The Tune In and Tune Up Car Clean-Up Event will be held at West Hills College Lemoore on Saturday, March 7, between 9am - 3pm, offering San Joaquin Valley residents the chance to get a free car emissions test and diagnostic inspection on the WHCL campus.

The event, offered by Valley Clean Air Now and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, will offer a free test and inspection to any San Joaquin Valley resident who has owned a car that fails emissions testing for more than six months.

The testing will be offered at Parking Lot A at West Hills College Lemoore. The campus is located at 555 College Drive.

The first 525 vehicles that qualify after the free emissions test that do not pass the emissions check will receive a $500 voucher for repairs at a participating STAR smog shop. Free food and drinks will also be available as supplies last.

The event is a screening event only and smog certificates will not be issued.

More than 10,000 vehicles attended Valley CAN's Tune In Tune Up events in 2012, more than 60% of which received vouchers with a 90% redemption rate.

For event information, email info@valley-can.org or call 1-800-806-2004.

## WEST HILLS COLLEGE COALINGA FARM OF THE FUTURE HOSTING FFA FIELD DAY MARCH 7

The West Hills College Coalinga Farm of the Future will be hosting a Future Farmers of America field day on Saturday, March 7, with competitions for eight different FFA contests.

More than 200 students from schools across the state will travel to the Farm of the Future on 518 Gale Ave. in Coalinga to compete in the event, with 26 schools registered to attend as of February 25.

The fourth field day hosted by WHCC at the complex, the event will include competition in the Best Informed Greenhand, Agricultural Mechanics, Small Engines, Farm Records, Land Judging, Coop Quiz, Light Horse Judging and Farm Power contests.

The action will start at 8am and culminate with the awarding of trophies and ribbons to the winning teams and individuals in each event. Buckles will be awarded to first place individuals, plaques to first place teams, and ribbons to other winning individuals.

"The purpose for hosting these field days is to allow high school students to see our wonderful facilities and become aware of the agricultural programs that we offer in Precision Agriculture, Welding, Heavy Equipment, Irrigation, and Crop Science," said WHCC Agriculture Science and Technology Instructor Sharon Freeman.

For more information about the contest or the Farm of the Future, call the instructor at (951) 204-8697.

## 27TH ANNUAL STUDENT ART SHOW

The Tulare City Historical Society and the Tulare Historical Museum are pleased to announce an exhibition of artwork by Tulare City School and Tulare Union High School Students. The exhibit will be on display Thursday, March 5 – Saturday, April 4, in the Tulare Historical Museum's Heritage Art Gallery. Dozens of beautiful pieces of artwork are being displayed by the talented young people of Tulare.

Reception for the artists (our students), will be Thursday, March 5, 2015, from 4 – 6pm. The public is invited and the reception is free of charge

The museum is located at 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare. Hours of operation are 10am – 4pm, Thursday – Saturday. In addition to the regular hours, the museum will be open the third Sunday of the month for free, through May. Admission is $5.00 for adults, $3.00 for seniors 55+ and Southern California Automobile Club members, $2.00 for students, and free for Tulare City Historical Society members and children under 5 years old. For more information, call 686-2074 or visit www.tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

## PASSPORT APPLICATION ACCEPTANCE:

The Tulare Public Library is a passport application acceptance facility assisting people in getting their United States passport. The hours of availability are:

- Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 11am-1pm and 2-5pm
- Friday: 11am-1pm and 2-6pm
- Saturday: 11am-2pm

# CEMEX

Continued from p. 1

quarry site is isolated from the broader groundwater elevation concerns in the rest of Tulare County or the San Joaquin Valley. A figure presented in the Final Memo (p.17) generated using a Department of Water Resources groundwater information tool, demonstrates that the Lemon Cove area actually has seen a general increase in groundwater conditions between spring 2013 and spring 2014. The specific conditions at the neighboring wells, however, saw the opposite condition during this same period."

Tully and Young's report explains why, during this statewide drought, not one well in Lemon Cove has gone dry nor lost elevation--that is except the four wells next to CEMEX' Stillwell gravel mine.

Mitchell's assertions were uttered again at the February 25 continuation of the public hearing concerning CEMEX and the effected residents. This was the second hearing in a process that was started last December 10. The first hearing included three and a half hours of presentations and testimonies over who was at fault for the wells going dry, the future of CEMEX' conditional use permit, and appropriate compensation for the residents' losses.

Mike Spata, director of Resource Management Agency (RMA), started the February 25 hearing by informing the planning commission that CEMEX and the four effected residents had entered into negotiations and seemed to be making progress. He said that lawyers for both sides have been talking and exchanging documents. He recommended that the Planning Commission give the process 30 more days to see if they can reach a settlement. Mitchell and Ray Carlsen, the lawyer for the residents, concurred with Spata.

The planning commission thus voted unanimously to extend the public hearing for 30 days. The next hearing is scheduled for April 8 at 9am in the supervisors' chambers. Public comment is welcome.

According to Carlsen, the two lawyers met once in early January, and then right after the second public hearing on February 25. Spata participated in both as a mediator. Carlsen was optimistic that the residents had a shot at settling.

Carlsen said that it's a good time for the effected residents to put together a settlement offer. He doesn't trust CEMEX to get it done, or do a sufficient job, so he planned on taking the initiative. Carlsen will be meeting with the residents on the afternoon of March 8, when he will present a draft agreement that the families can review and amend, Carlsen will then present their proposed settlement to CEMEX, which CEMEX is expected to counter**.** Carlsen predicted that neither side will be happy with the final settlement.

All negotiations between the residents and CEMEX are confidential so both sides can talk freely between themselves. Possible terms of the settlement include digging each home a deeper well, financial compensation for their expenses, or digging a well by Terminus Dam and running a pipe to the homes. The idea of connecting to the Lemon Cove Sanitation District was suggested but the pipes are more than a mile away. The aforementioned terms are all poor solutions. Digging new wells may produce no water and compensating the residents for their expenditures doesn't address the loss of their life's investment, which for most is their home. CEMEX' mining activities have left the homes without water and thus worthless.

During public comment, Woodlake's Julie Bigham, who lives close to the Lemon Cove facility, asked the planning commission what their end game was. "What happens when the water is turned off, the mine goes idle, or CEMEX' permit gets revoked? What happens then? You have to disclose all this if you want to sell your home and their homes are permanently branded." She said that modifications can be done but once settled, the residents won't have as much say so or any recourse if it happens again.

Rob Morton, the only effected resident who could juggle his work schedule to attend the hearing, reiterated the fact that CEMEX was blatantly lying about the drought being the cause of the wells going dry. Not a stones' throw away from his house is a 30 acre pond 50-feet-deep full of water, now and all through the summer, created by CEMEX' mining activities. He also reminded the commission that most Tulare County families do not have the resources to take off work to attend meetings and hearings and fight multi-national companies, nor should they have to.

Morton's main question was what happens if the resident's settle and then CEMEX leaves or executes a faulty reclamation of the property. He wanted to know what guarantee the county would give them, as the issuer of the mining permit, that they would enforce the conditional use permits.

Oroville and Mary Cloud with their dog Patches with the RMA provided water after their well went dry.

"I don't want to go through this again. This has been nothing less than Hell," said Morton.

## Resolving the Problem

Carlsen explained that there are only two ways to settle the issue. One, negotiations, where each party has control over the process or two, litigation, where control is given up to a judge and jury.

But the residents who live along the Lemon Cove facility, a gravel mine taken over by CEMEX, don't agree. Their opinion is that the RMA recommended approving the mine, the planning commission put together the conditional use permit, and the supervisors voted on it. Thus the county is ultimately responsible. In every instance where mining in the aquifer was proposed, there was expert testimony and appeals against it. The consequences of digging in the county's aquifer have been debated and proven since the first disastrous Artesia mine in Dry Creek in the 1960's. For 50 years Tulare County residents have told the supervisors how mining in the riverbed has ruined their properties and sometimes their lives, but the supervisors continue to approve their permits.

Carlsen concurs that digging in the aquifer is a bad idea. He said that nature made the river basins perfect underground filters where the water can easily flow. He said that problems have been plaguing these mines that dig up the aquifer for years, and that this case is just one little piece of a bigger problem. "The problem is that the planning commission puts together all these conditions for the use permit, then just puts it on a shelf and forgets about them. No one is enforcing them." According to the conditional use permit for the Stillwell mine, CEMEX was supposed to be providing data every month to the RMA on water levels in the wells. If CEMEX had been complying to their conditional use permit, and the RMA had enforced the conditions, the resident's wells would have never gone dry.

Spata has defended the RMA, saying that the agency has acted on the matter as quickly as the process has allowed, which is true. The Tulare County residents' point is that RMA should have not let the situation happen in the first place.

A grandmother who lives next to the Lemon Cove Facility said that it's sad that those residents who don't have the money to hire a lawyer could lose everything. Because CEMEX has unlimited resources with which to fight, the little guy is always forced to settle. Even a wealthy person could not afford to take CEMEX to court. CEMEX, by comparison, has limitless funds to just wait the little guy out until they die or run out of money.

The Lemon Cove Facility neighbors have been fighting--first RMC Pacific Materials, and now CEMEX--for 20 years over their wells going dry because of mining activities.

As for the residents living next to the Stillwell mine, it was a local benefactor who fronted the money to pay Carlsen's $250 hourly fee, an amount that few of the plaintiffs make in a week. Many wonder why it has fallen on the shoulders of such modest Tulare County residents to fight a multi-national company to get it to comply with a permit issued by the county. Carlsen pragmatically says that, as is always the case, the residents next to the Stillwell mine will have to settle. "Who is going to pay to take CEMEX court? Something is better than nothing."

## CEMEX Begins Filling V-Trench at Lemon Cove Facility

Although the Lemon Cove Facility is not part of the equation in this round of negotiations, CEMEX has realized they need to deal with the wells that have lost water at this mine also. Without any advance notice, and no recent discussion, CEMEX started to fill the recharge trench that runs next to the Lemon Cove Facility. Frank Callahan, who has not been able to fully irrigate his citrus since CEMEX shut off their pumps, is at the beginning of the recharge trench that runs west to east. His well went up eight feet in a matter of days. Nancy Long, who lives further up the trench, had her well go up by two feet.

The trench built at the Lemon Cove Facility was a trial case to see if it would maintain the neighbors' well water levels, and it worked. That is how CEMEX knew that when they turned off the pumps at the Stillwell mine the resident's wells would go dry. The drought, for CEMEX, was just a happy coincidence.

George Clausen, who has also been fighting the adverse effects of mining in the Kaweah River aquifer for 30 years, said that CEMEX won't talk to them. There was no warning or explanation why they started filling the recharge trench. The Lemon Cove Facility processes gravel but no longer functions as a mine. A local farmer's theory is that CEMEX waits and sees how much they can get away with until their lawyers sound the alarm that they could get sued. The farmer, whose agriculture wells have lost half of their water, thinks that after the Fresno Bee article came out blaming CEMEX for the dry wells that the company lawyers realized, "maybe we should do something. This is getting widely known."

## Reclamation Plans Need to Be Reassessed

Including the Lemon Cove facility in the settlement negotiations was contemplated because both sets of farmers and residents had depleted wells because of CEMEX' mines. But the Lemon Cove facility has one huge glaring difference from the Stillwell mine. The Lemon Cove Facility consists of two mines--an older, larger mine, and a newer, smaller one--but both were approved without an Environmental Impact Report. When the older mine got its permit, EIRs were not mandatory. Then, because no EIR had been done on the older mine, the newer mine got approved under a negative declaration, meaning an EIR was not deemed necessary. The end result is that neither have a feasible reclamation plan.

The first thing out of Mitchell's mouth, after blaming the drought, was the fact that he didn't think it was necessary to reexamine the reclamation plans. "There is no evidence that the reclamation plan won't work." Clausen has been fighting an uphill battle for the RMA or Board of Supervisors to force CEMEX to update their reclamation plans. Because there is no EIR, he wants something on paper explaining how CEMEX plans to restore the property to what it was before the mine arrived. He also wants there to be sufficient financial reassurances in case CEMEX botches the job.

CEMEX' delaying tactics seem to have worked, as reassurances and review of the reclamation plan has not been yet put on the table. The gravel mining company does not want to revise their reclamation plans because to really reclaim property would costs hundreds of thousands of dollars and reassurances should be the same. Right now the money set aside to fix a botched reclamation job by CEMEX is a paultry $52,588.78.

## The Next Step

CEMEX might be asking for a new mining permit at McKay Point by the end of this year. Unless the gravel mining company can show good faith in compensating their Stillwell neighbors for their loss of property value then World War III may break out if the Tulare County Supervisors grant them one more mining permit.

# Viewpoint

## Desert Pilgrimage to the Cradle of the Bomb

**Rivera Sun**

The lawn is mowed. This small detail cracks my heart into pieces. A silent scream wails in the hollow space of my ribs.

I am standing at the birthplace of the atomic bomb.

Green grass slopes down to a pond. A grandfather helps a child circle the concrete walkways on a plastic scooter. Ducks paddle around a metal statue of cranes. The rusted iron of the metal cranes look charred and melting. The lumps and bubbles remind me of the hanging flesh of Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims. Like everything in the mundane city park, the cranes, upon close inspection, cannot hide the fact that this very spot was where the first nuclear bomb was built.

In my mind, an angry red mushroom cloud roils thousands of feet into the sky.

Nowhere is Hannah Arendt's phrase *the banality of evil* more potent than at Los Alamos, New Mexico. The prosperous county -one of the nation's richest - sits amongst the piñon pines and junipers in the high-altitude desert of northern New Mexico. It exists almost exclusively for the purpose of researching and developing nuclear weapons.

My shoes are standing on the place where the first atomic bombs were built. The World War II sheds and buildings are gone, replaced by this city park, but the canyons are still hide radioactivity . . . and a mile away, scientists are developing bombs that make Fat Man and Little Boy look like cheap firecrackers.

Awakening before dawn, my partner and I have come on a pilgrimage to Los Alamos to speak truth to power at a meeting of our elected officials from local county, city, and tribal governments. Not one of these mayors, councilors, or commissioners dares to use their position on the coalition to speak out against nuclear weapons. The livelihood of the impoverished northern New Mexicans depends on the laboratory. It is the second largest employer in the state.

*Lives are at stake,* we are told again and again. *We need the jobs.*

*Lives are at stake.* The phrase echoes in my mind as I watch the fountain in the center of Ashley Pond. Seven billion lives are hanging "three minutes to midnight" as the United States keeps nuclear weapons ready to deploy. Three hundred and twenty million Americans are kept in danger by the US and Russian tensions and our governments' inability to dismantle their nuclear arsenals. One and a half million New Mexicans are thrust in the shadow of Los Alamos . . . a laboratory that sits on top of a fault line, nearly burned to the ground in a catastrophic forest fire a few years ago, and still stores plutonium on site. Countless peoples of the Marshall Islands and North American tribes have been poisoned by radiation. 150,000 Japanese lost their lives in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 70 years ago.

At the same time that a secret team of scientists was constructing the first atomic bomb at Los Alamos, 11 million people were being shoved into gas chambers. In Nazi Germany and occupied territories, local officials let train loads of men, women, and children pass through their depots because the officials' lives - and livelihoods - were at stake. German bureaucrats filed paperwork just like New Mexican bureaucrats - because their livelihoods were at stake. Construction crews built Auschwitz and the other death camps, because they needed the jobs. Scientists designed the gas chambers, incinerators, and toxic chemicals. Townspeople coughed on acrid black smoke and went on with their daily lives.

The banality of evil lies in this mowed lawn that slopes down to the complacent Ashley Pond. I sit for a moment by the water, watching the ducks and the fountain, thinking of Japanese civilians with eyeballs hanging out of their charred faces as they stumbled through the ruins of Hiroshima. I think of the post-bombing suicides when traumatized Japanese, unable to cope with the horrors, threw themselves under trains, leaving sisters to collect dismembered limbs.

"The Atomic Bomb has resulted for the time being in destroying the soul of Japan. What has happened to the soul of the destroying nation is yet too early to see."

- Mahatma Gandhi, 1945

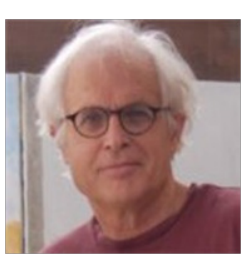
Gandhi's words make me weep. I feel shame for my country. I am a member of a people who would not only drop one, but two horrific bombs on Japan, and currently has enough weapons to destroy the whole world. I am a citizen of the nation that contaminated whole chains of islands with nuclear tests. I am part of a country that devotes trillions of dollars to these monstrosities while just down the hill the local children are going hungry.

On the other hand, this year marks the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There will be hundreds of vigils and actions all around the world, and I invite you to be part of the hundreds who will pilgrimage to Los Alamos this summer to speak out against the horror of nuclear weapons during the August 6th & 9th Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day Vigils. I am one of the hundreds who will choose to embody Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s words about nuclear weapons, "It is nonviolence or nonexistence," by taking part in the Campaign Nonviolence National Conference, studying active nonviolence with Rev. James Lawson, Erica Chenoweth, Kathy Kelly, Medea Benjamin, Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Ken Butigan, John Dear, and more. I am one of the thousands who live in the shadow of Los Alamos who choose to stand up to nuclear weapons.

And today, I am one person standing at the epicenter of our nation's *banality of evil*, listening to a child laughing.

## Beyond Deterrence, Compassion

**Winslow Myers**



Ronald Reagan's assertion back in 1984 that "a nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought" seems to have become accepted across the political spectrum in the U.S. and abroad. The level of destruction that would result would at best make it impossible for medical systems to respond adequately and at worst lead to climate change on a global scale. Reagan continued: "The only value in our two nations possessing nuclear weapons is to make sure they will never be used. But then would it not be better to do away with them entirely?"

Thirty years later, the paradox of deterrence—nine nuclear powers with weapons kept absolutely ready for use so that they will never have to be used—is far from resolved. Meanwhile 9-11 bent our imaginations toward suicidal nuclear terrorism. The possession of even our large and varied arsenal of nuclear weapons would not deter a determined extremist. Fear became so powerful that it motivated not only the grotesque proliferation of information-gathering agencies but also assassination and torture. Anything became justified, including trillion dollar stalemated wars, to preempt the wrong adversary from getting their hands on a nuke.

Are there flashpoints where systems designed for reliable and eternal deterrence blur into a new landscape of deterrence breakdown? The example du jour is Pakistan, where a weak government maintains a stable—we hope—deterrent balance of nuclear forces against India. At the same time Pakistan percolates with extremists with possible sympathetic connections to the Pakistani military and intelligence services. This focus upon Pakistan is conjectural. It may be unfair. A nuclear weapon could just as easily fall out of state control in regions like the Caucasus or—who knows?—even at some U.S. base where security was lax. The point is that fear of such scenarios distorts our thinking as we struggle to respond creatively to the reality that nuclear deterrence doesn't deter.

To see the fruits of this fear comprehensively invites seeing the process across time, including future time. The familiar argument that nuclear deterrence has kept us safe for many decades starts to break down if we simply imagine two possible worlds: a world toward which we are heading hell-bent if we don't change course, in which self-escalating fear motivates more and more nations to acquire nuclear weapons, or a world where nobody has them. Which world do you want your children to inherit?

Cold War deterrence was aptly called the balance of terror. The prevalent mythic division of irresponsible extremists and responsible, self-interested nation-states encourages an Orwellian mental contortion: we conveniently deny that our own nuclear weapons are themselves a potent form of terror—they are meant to terrify opponents into caution. We legitimize them as tools for our survival. At the same time we project this denied terror upon our enemies, expanding them into perverted evil giants. The terrorist threat of a suitcase nuke overlaps with the revived threat of the Cold War turning hot as the West plays nuclear chicken with Putin.

Peace through strength must be redefined—to become peace as strength. This principle, obvious to the many smaller, non-nuclear powers, is reluctantly perceived and quickly denied by the powers that be. Of course the powers that be are not unhappy to have enemies because enemies are politically convenient to the robust health of the arms manufacturing system, a system that includes a prohibitively expensive refurbishment of the U.S. nuclear arsenal that wastes resources needed for the looming challenge of conversion to sustainable energy.

The antidote to the Ebola-like virus of fear is to begin from the premise of interrelationship and interdependence—even with enemies. The Cold War ended because Soviets and Americans realized they had a common desire to see their grandchildren grow up. However death-obsessed, cruel and brutal extremists seem to us, we can choose not to dehumanize them. We can keep our perspective by recalling the brutalities in our own history, including the fact that we were the first to use nuclear weapons to kill people. We can admit our own part in the creation of the villainous nest of murderousness in the Mideast. We can dig into the root causes of extremist thinking, especially among the young. We can support vulnerable but worthy initiatives like the introduction of a compassion initiative in Iraq, led by an Iraqi poet. We can emphasize how many challenges we can only solve together.

In the early stages of the U.S. presidential campaign, candidates are unusually accessible—an opportunity for citizens to ask probing questions that penetrate beneath scripted answers and safe political bromides. What would a Middle East policy look like if it were based not in playing multiple sides against each other but rather in a spirit of compassion and reconciliation? Why can't we use some of the massive pile of money we plan to spend to renew our obsolete weapons on securing loose nuclear materials around the world? Why is the U.S. the top arms dealer? As president, what will you do to help our nation live up to its disarmament obligations as a signer of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty?

*~In memory of peace activist Cynthia Fisk, 1925-2015.*

# Columns & Letters

## Re: Net Neutrality

Dear Friends,

Democratic commissioners on the FCC have adopted net neutrality rules, which will allow the FCC to regulate Internet Service Providers as public utilities. It's hard to see the need for this action, since the Internet has been thriving without these regulations. Furthermore, these rules may stifle innovation and could be exploited to ram through Internet taxes and price controls. A Forbes article discusses the many drawbacks of net neutrality here.

Separately, the Tax Foundation published an analysis of my tax reform proposal, finding that it would expand the economy by 6.8 percent and create "more jobs, higher incomes, and better opportunities." You can read the write-up here. National Review's Ramesh Ponnuru comments on my plan here.

Finally, the Nunes Digest is updated here.

Sincerely,

Devin

Devin Nunes
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

## Tulare-Kings PFLAG

Founded in 2008, the Tulare & Kings Counties Chapter of PFLAG continues to serve the parents, families, friends, and supporters of the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning) community in Tulare and Kings Counties. From its founding in New York City in 1972 by Jeanne Manford, a mother determined to support her gay son, PFLAG has grown into an international organization dedicated to, as mentioned in the Tulare-Kings PFLAG's mission statement, "promoting the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights."

"PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity."

The rapid change in our society's acceptance of the LGBTQ community, especially in the last decade, has left many people wondering how they can help, or how they can obtain factual, reliable information concerning friends and/or family who come out as LGBTQ. PFLAG chapters across the country, and in other nations around the world, provide a safe, confidential, local source of support and community.

Tulare & Kings Counties PFLAG meets every third Sunday of the month, at the Educational and Cultural Center, Congregation B'nai David, 1039 S. Chinowth Rd, Visalia, at 3pm. Meetings are open to the public, and individuals and families who are looking for information and support, whether they are interested in learning more about the LGBTQ community, or are coping with the news that a loved one is LGBTQ, are encouraged to attend. Members of the LGBTQ community are also invited to attend, to give and receive support.

Each meeting begins with introductions and announcements, followed by break-out groups for discussion and support. The second hour is a presentation by invited guests or members to speak on topics of concern to the LGBTQ community, their families, and the general public. Future presentations will include speakers from the Female Leadership Academy, discussions of LGBTQ youth homelessness, and issues facing the transgender community.

For more information, visit http://pflag-tulare-kings.org or visit us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/pflagtkc

Jim Reeves
Membership Director
Tulare-Kings PFLAG
Visalia

"Hugh Bacca YUou should really get your facts straight before you go publicity blasting me I am already incorporated and I am in fact finishing up for my 501c3 status I have not in fact taken a dime towards Mooney Grove park You have obviously been listening to the General Manager of Parks and Rec I was not asked to buy A bench but rather to raise $ 35-45K dollars and put the money into a "General Fund" which then goes to paying other county projects pay checks,benefits etcIt is you Mr Bacca who has had the "wool" pulled over your eyes Bring on the law enforcement dude Fact is I am a threat to those persons involved at Parks and Rec Mr Bacca, You are so misinformed Parks and Rec must be laughing….All the way to the bank"

— *Mary Bryant*

**Send us your Letters to the Editor**

**By mail:**
208 W. Main, Ste. E, Visalia, CA 93291

**By email:** editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

**Editor's note:**
Now that the Valley Voice is receiving many more letters than previously, we'd like to state the obvious by saying that it is not our policy to edit your editorials. Bear this in mind, therefore, when writing us--so please be lucid.

## Black Tie

**Alex Oldenbourg**

Syria is too far away. Sherman has decided to join Batman instead.

### Veteran's Corner

## California Veterans Benefits

**Joe Wright**

California offers many benefits to its veterans.

The *College Fee Waiver Program* offers children and dependents of service-connected disabled or service-related deceased veterans a waiver of tuition fees for California Universities, and State and Community Colleges. Benefits are awarded on an "academic year" basis, and are based on the student's income. Students are required to reapply each year for continued benefits.

*CAL-VET Loan Programs* provides low-cost, low interest financing to eligible, qualified veterans to purchase homes, farms or mobile homes for use as their primary residence.

*State Veterans Homes* are available to veterans and their spouses. The veteran must be a California resident at the time of application; must be honorably discharged and must have served during a time of war; must be at least 62 or disabled; must be self-reliant at the time of entry and able to live with minimal support in residential care. Fees are assessed based upon income.

*Fishing/Hunting Licenses and State Parks and Recreation Passes* are available at reduced fees.

*Additional Benefits* include employment and unemployment insurance assistance, business license/tax and fee waivers, property tax exemptions, and waiver of motor vehicle registration fees.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office issues Veteran I.D. cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email.

There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com.

*Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call 852-2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.*

"THE REAL MOONEY GROVE PROJECT is forming it's BOARD OF DIRECTORS I am looking for a TREASURER preferably with bookeeing / banking experience We are planning a fundraiser for May 2015 Join our cause Face book The Real Mooney Grove Project The Real Mooney Grove Project Memories and therealmooneygroveproject.org Alot of new things going on Donating thru the COUNTY to MOONEY GROVE means that money goes into a GENERAL FUND meaning it NEVER goes to the park It goes toward other county projects,paychecks,employee benefits etc NO WONDER THE PARK IS SUCH A MESS

In the last 14 years the park has disintegrated at the hands of COUNTY and Parks and Rec officials IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGING OF THE GUARD Please join our over 800 members and STOP THE DESTRUCTION AND BRING BACK OUR PARK"

— *Mary Bryant*

**Like us on Facebook: fb.me/ourvalleyvoice**

# VTD

Continued from p. 1

local control over its own coverage because it is owned by publishing behemoth, Gannett. The publishing company owns both the VTD and Californian along with *USA Today*, the *Des Moines Register*, the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, and the *Arizona Republic*. The company owns many other papers, radio and television stations. This explains why, on opening up the VTD to the editorial page on Saturday, February 28, there were no local letters to the editor. There was, though, a quarter-page editorial from the *Arizona Republic*.

It's been awhile since the VTD has had an on-site editor or publisher. The last time the VTD had a fulltime executive editor was Diane Hayes in the summer of 2014. Hayes was recruited from the *Post-Tribune* in the Chicago area and relocated to Visalia for her new job. She barely made it through the year before resigning or getting fired. I asked Hayes which it was and she replied, "I don't really care to revisit the VTD drama, or even the long, sad decline of newspapers in general." Watching your newspaper being slowly dismantled by corporate bean counters has got to be stressful. Hayes is currently the Sequoia Riverland Trust development director.

Amy Pack was VTD's last fulltime on-site publisher. Interestingly, for the last seven years with VTD she was also president and publisher of the *Salinas Californian*. She managed to be both without boring her readers with the local stories about Salinas.

So why can't the VTD have its own editor and publisher like the smaller and seemingly successful *Hanford Sentinel*? According to the *Monterey Herald*, it's all part of Gannett's 'newsroom of the future' initiative. That initiative not only merged the editor and publisher positions of both papers, but forced all of VTD employees and *Salinas Californian* employees to reapply for their jobs with no guarantee of being hired back.

According to a *Visalia Times-Delta* reporter who survived the "reapplication process," Melinda Morales, a long-time writer and assistant editor, did not get hired back. Morales was one of the few locals left at the paper in any position of authority. With her gone, James Ward of *Choices* has taken over some of her responsibilities. The VTD reporter said that during the reapplication process, Gannett wasn't interested in the applicant's journalistic or writing experience, but more how you could expand the paper's on-line presence.

The *Monterey Herald*, which is owned by a different publishing company, said of Gannett, "It is just better to say you're building the 'newsroom of the future' rather than decimating the newsroom of the present. Next to go, of course, will be the newsroom types who haven't adapted so well to spreading their journalism via Twitter and Facebook or, put another way, the older folks."

aligned with Gannett's new "Picasso" initiative, in which journalism is driven solely by metrics and journalists are expected to be marketers and 'community connectors.'

Another euphemism being bandied about by Gannett is "streamlining the process." This magical phrase has led to layoffs at other Gannett newspapers in other regions.

At the media blog *Jimromenesko.com*, a former Gannett Wisconsin employee, Logan Carlson, wrote in regarding the "newsroom of the future" shakeup at the company's Wisconsin properties:

"For the last month the 10 daily newspapers in Wisconsin that Gannett owns have been going through the restructuring process. When we first began hearing rumors of NOTF, we all knew it was essentially company spin for reducing the newsroom positions while making it sound like that wasn't going to be the case. All told, I believe the company goal was to reduce payroll by 15 percent," the former staffer wrote.

> *"The online operation (incl. the VTD-Facebook connection) has been a nightmare for us paid readers/subscribers; bottom line, nothing works here, and the paper has been badly run since the merger. No one on staff has surfaced to remedy the many problems that have been reported. Then, where will the "new" managing editor be physically located after a year of vacancy? One can have all the impressive skills in the world, and it'll do no good if he/she isn't familiar with city/county issues and their history."*
>
> **Renee Lapin**, in a comment on the Visalia Times-Delta's webpage announcing Wevurski's arrival.

The *Salinas Californian*

Coming soon to a newspaper near you.

As for Morales, her departure may have been because her qualifications did not neatly fit into Gannett's 'newsroom of the future' initiative, which, according to an internal document, is described as:

"Under the 'Newsroom of the Future,' there are 16 job descriptions. Each newsroom employee at each Gannett property must be in one of these positions. They are all digital-centric and

For years, while Amy Pack was the publisher of both papers, Visalia's copy edit desk proofread all of the *Salinas Californian's* articles before publication. According to the *Monterey Herald*, three copy edit desk positions are going to be eliminated in Visalia--which is virtually all of them. Wevurski said that, on top of all his other responsibilities, daily editing will mostly fall to him and another Salinas-based editor.

Gannett's headquarters are in McLean, Virginia, while its production center is located in Phoenix, Arizona--where the VTD content is sent every night; the VTD's editor and publisher both live out of the area. Welcome to the modern age of local reporting!

It's a new world in the newspaper publishing industry, and Gannett's "newsroom of the future" leaves Visalia readers with more unknowns than knowns. But the revelation that neither the editor nor publisher is from Tulare County does answer one gnawing question -- why the *Visalia Times-Delta* still thinks that Connie Conway is our assembly member in Sacramento.

Valley Voice
Valley Scene

# Addams Family Musical Opens at COS on March 13

**Elizabeth LaMar**

"They're creepy and they're kooky, mysterious and spooky, they're altogether ooky!" The Broadway musical sensation The Addams Family opens Friday, March 13 at the College of the Sequoias.

From the creators of Jersey Boys, Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice, and Drama Desk Award-winning composer/lyricist Andrew Lippa, the frightfully delightful world of Gomez, Morticia, Uncle Fester, Grandma, Wednesday, Pugsley and Lurch come to spectacular life in this all-new story. Based on the characters created by cartoonist Charles Addams, the magnificently morbid family is put to the test when outsiders come to dinner, hurling them into a night that will change their lives forever.

The Addams Family features an original story, and it's every father's nightmare. Wednesday Addams, the ultimate princess of darkness, has grown up and fallen in love with a sweet, smart young man from a respectable family. A man her parents have never met. And if that weren't upsetting enough, she confides in her father and begs him not to tell her mother. Now, Gomez Addams must do something he's never done before--keep a secret from his beloved wife, Morticia. Everything will change for the whole family on the fateful night they host a dinner for Wednesday's "normal" boyfriend and his parents.

In a prolific career spanning six decades, Charles Addams created several thousand cartoons, sketches and drawings, many of which were published in The New Yorker. But it was his creation of The Addams Family characters that brought him his greatest acclaim. His unique drawings combined the twisted, macabre and just plain weird with charm, wit and enchantment. They have entertained millions worldwide and served as the inspiration for multiple television series, motion pictures and, now, a new stage musical.

Filled with show-stopping musical numbers and all of the classic Addams Family 'tricks,' The Addams Family is a musical with plenty of heart--a show with humor that's uplifting and true to the beloved Charles Addams characters. It's a multi-layered love story and a story of love, loving, and being loved.

David Lemon - Gomez and Jordyn White - Morticia

Tickets ($24 for adults and $20 for students and senior citizens) for the 7:30pm shows (March 13, March 14, March 19, March 20, March 21) and the 2pm shows (March 15 & March 22) are on sale now.

# "Family Secrets" Revealed at PC Art Gallery

**Staff Reports**

The public is invited to see the exhibition, "Family Secrets: The Paintings of Marilyn Prescott McGrady" through March 19 at the Porterville College Art Gallery. Marilyn Prescott McGrady is an artist and designer living and working in Fresno.

McGrady has titled this series of 17 paintings "Family Secrets." She described that each of the paintings in the series began with a family photo.

McGrady explained that the pictures were, "nearly always black and white, small format, 'baby pictures' in a long forgotten photo album. But those photos held me. There were secrets there, and truths to be known. The paintings created from those photos became an avenue for self-confrontation, self-knowledge and self-disclosure. It is intense portraiture; an exploration of the emotional persona behind the public face."

'Home Fires Burning' by Marilyn Prescott McGrady.

The paintings range far afield from the original black and white photos. Large in size and painted in highly saturated colors, they combine floating elements and changes in scale along with other dream-like elements such as fantastic animals to illuminate truths that appear psychological in nature.

Though the paintings in this series are highly personal, McGrady stated that universal elements of "memory, loss and the nature of childhood" are represented and broader social concerns, such as "issues of control, manipulation, and domination" are also explored.

"The construction of identity and especially gender roles is a special concern of mine," McGrady said. "The waste of human potential and diversity that flows from strict gender role construction is very often one of the tragic stories of our time."

McGrady earned a bachelor's degree from California State University at Long Beach and did graduate work at University of California at Irvine and California State University at Fullerton. She exhibits regularly in galleries and arts venues throughout the state, and is represented by Fig Tree Gallery in Fresno. Her work has been the subject of reviews in The Los Angeles Times, The Orange County Register and The Redlands Daily Facts, and is included in corporate, institutional and private collections from coast to coast in the United States.

Gallery hours are Monday through Thursday from 12-2pm and 4-6pm. Contact the front desk when you arrive to see the show for a free temporary parking permit. The Porterville College Art Gallery is located on campus at 100 East College Avenue in Porterville. Contact Jim Entz at 791-2257 for more information.

James Garner Tribute to Johnny Cash

# Fair Foundation Fundraiser Features Festive Johnny Cash Tribute

**Staff Reports**

Friends of the Tulare County Fair will host a fundraiser featuring the James Garner Tribute to Johnny Cash on Friday, March 6 at the Tulare County Fairgrounds.

The evening begins with a social hour at 6 pm, followed by dinner at 7 and a live auction with auctioneer David Macedo.

The revived nonprofit foundation held a fundraiser last year that made possible the paving of the fairgrounds, much-needed improvements to the show barn and landscaping, and the popular Buttercup the Cow display.

Proceeds from the 2015 fundraiser will help support 4H and FFA youth, and make possible additional grounds improvements for the Tulare County Fair, to be held between September 16 and 20. Tickets are $100 each or $1,000 for a reserved table.

Last year's fundraiser was hugely successful, according to Tulare County Fair CEO Pamela Fyock, with more than 450 tickets sold.

"We met our goal of having more school children at the fair last year, and this fundraiser is intended to help us bring in even more," Fyock said. "Children who are already involved in agriculture through 4H or FFA, but also children who need to learn about the industry that fuels the state's economy and feeds the world. We are a county rich in agricultural history and we owe it to our youth to educate them."

For information about the Friends of the Tulare County Fair Foundation fundraiser, contact Pamela Fyock, CEO, at 686-4707 or visit www.tcfair.org.

# Exhibition of Women Artists Opens March 5 at Arte Américas

Arte Américas, the Valley's largest Latino cultural center located at 1630 Van Ness in Fresno, will debut a new exhibition to coincide with National Women's History month on Thursday, March 5, featuring 35 artists from throughout California. The show, entitled "One Degree of Separation: A Sisterhood of California Women Artists," will fill all four galleries in the Downtown Fresno cultural arts center.

"This exhibition is a five-year concept and began with a core of 15 artists who have either shown works at Arte Américas previously, or were directly connected with our gallery presentations," said Executive Director and Chief Curator Frank Delgado. "We then asked several of the artists to invite up to two other women whom they knew personally, and whose work they admired… and the number of participants more than doubled," he added.

The works represent a wide spectrum of media, from framed oil paintings to textiles, sculpture, cut paper, and handcrafted woodwork created in the style of folk art toys found commonly in countries throughout the world. The participants include veteran and emerging artists from Fresno and the local foothill communities as well as acclaimed artists from Santa Cruz, Stockton and Los Angeles. The show will be on view through Mother's Day on Sunday, May 10.

'Black and Bougainvillea'

"The greater 'five-year vision' for this show is that each year the invitees will have the opportunity to invite two artists who they know personally," said the exhibition's Co-Curator Rebecca Caraveo.

"Due to space restrictions, a large number of artists will not show for two years in a row…but in 2020 we will invite all of the artists back for a show to be hosted in galleries throughout Fresno," Caraveo said.

The city-wide exhibition is envisioned be a testament to the impact and magnitude of women who are currently creating stunning works of art. "The community will be able to experience the concept in a way that we can only imagine today," said Delgado. "Each of the artists will be one degree of separation from our cultural center, from Fresno, and from each other…it will be powerful," she stated.

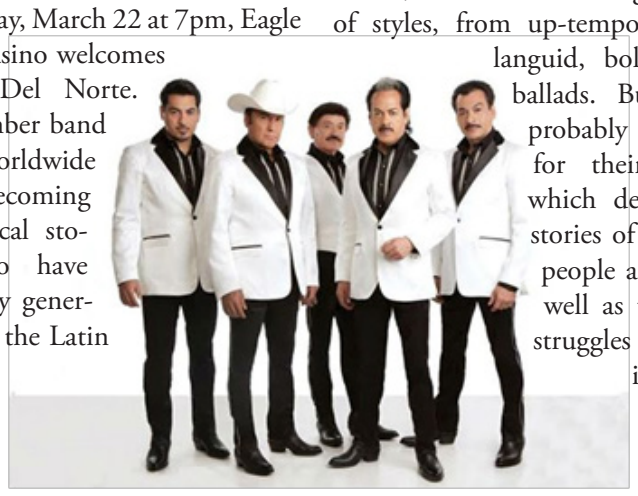
Admission to the galleries is free for this exhibition, thanks to a shared sponsorship by The Fresno County League of Mexican-American Women, Madera Latinas Unidas, and the Women's Studies Program at California State University, Fresno. Additional programming is also being scheduled to highlight artists who work beyond traditional visual media and include authors, poets, actors, and even Tai Chi instruction.

More information can be found on the Arte Américas website: www.arteamericas.org or by calling 559-266-2623 during regular gallery hours, Wednesday – Saturday 11am-5pm and Sunday 1pm-5pm.

# Los Tigres del Norte to Perform at Eagle Mountain

**Staff Reports**

On Sunday, March 22 at 7pm, Eagle Mountain Casino welcomes Los Tigres Del Norte. The five-member band has gained worldwide success by becoming leading musical storytellers who have inspired many generations within the Latin community. With a career span of more than three decades and millions of records sold, Los Tigres Del Norte have gained an enormous fan base not only in Latin America, but in the United States, Europe, and Asia.



Los Tigres Del Norte -- "Tigers of the North," have recorded songs in all kinds of styles, from up-tempo cumbias to languid, bolero-like love ballads. But, they are probably best known for their "corridos," which depict timeless stories of the Mexican people and culture as well as the lives and struggles of Hispanic immigrants in the United States.

Tickets start at $40 and are available online or in the gift shop.

Summit Club Members receive $5 off with each gift shop ticket purchase.

# Patsy Cline Tribute Last in Lindsay Concert Series

**Staff Reports**

A Tribute to the Music of Patsy Cline starring Joni Morris is the final show of the Lindsay Concert Series for 2014-15. The concert is one night only, Saturday, March 21 at 7:30pm.

Country music artist Joni Morris pays tribute to the music of legendary entertainer Patsy Cline. Fresh off her sell-out show in Hawaii, Morris returns to the South Valley for the show in Lindsay. This is Morris' first appearance on the Lindsay stage, but she is no stranger to the Central Valley.

Joni Morris

In October of 2014 she filled the Tower Theater for her Patsy Cline Tribute show. Her show combines music with stories, jokes and reflections on Cline's too-short life. Her tragic death at only 30 years old, left a void that some say has never been filled, but her music lives on.

Cline's hits began in 1957 with Donn Hecht's and Alan Block's "Walkin' After Midnight", Hank Cochran's and Harlan Howard's "I Fall to Pieces", Hank Cochran's "She's Got You", Willie Nelson's "Crazy" and ended in 1963 with Don Gibson's "Sweet Dreams". All these songs are part of the show, along with many other of her lesser-known hits. She was the first female artist to cross over from the country music charts to the pop charts with her hit, "Walking After Midnight."

Morris was born and raised in Stockton, California. A recent article in The Fresno Bee told of her early life growing up in a country music family.

"Her mother loved Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn. Her dad loved Hank Williams and George Jones. Both loved to sing, and family gatherings often turned into impromptu performances, especially once a beer or two had been opened, Morris says."

Morris went on to enter singing competitions, and then put together her own show centered around the music of Cline. During the past 20 years she and her manager-husband have traveled to nearly every state performing the show. The Lindsay Community Theater is located at 190 N Elmwood in Lindsay. All seats are $20. Tickets may be purchased at: www.lindsaycommunitytheater.com.

# TCOE Annual Science Fair Becomes STEM Expo

**Staff Reports**

The Tulare County Office of Education's Educational Resource Services program (ERS) has re-imagined the long-running Tulare County Science & Engineering Fair as a free, one-day public event where students can exhibit their science projects alongside science-based entertainment and learning opportunities for the whole family. On March 14, the community is invited to celebrate everything about science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Parents, students, teachers, local businesses and community organizations will converge on the Lindsay High School campus for the inaugural STEM Expo.

Students entering their science projects in the STEM Expo may do so in one of six categories –Life Science; Earth and Space Science; Physical Science – Chemistry; Physical Science – Physics; Engineering and Mathematics; and Behavioral and Social Sciences. The student science projects will be judged and winners selected to represent Tulare County at the California State Science Fair in Los Angeles. At this time, 120 projects have been registered to compete in the student science competition. Additionally this year, families and friends can develop science projects of their own and bring them to display in a non-competitive category.

Prior to the student science awards ceremony, NASA scientist Dr. Michael Gunson will speak to attendees. Dr. Gunson is the manager of the Global Change & Energy Program and the project scientist for the Orbiting Carbon Observatory (OCO-2) at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in the Pasadena area. The OCO-2 is a mission designed to make precise, time-dependent global measurements of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) from an Earth-orbiting satellite. His research interests have primarily focused on the physical and chemical processes of the Earth's atmosphere using space-based instruments.

Throughout the event, visitors can enjoy a robotics workshop and exhibitions, a coding workshop and a Maker Space, where participants can learn to build working items out of ordinary materials. The Expo will also feature a speakers' series, vendors and exhibitors. Among the scheduled exhibitors are the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the Tulare County Sheriff's Office, which is bringing an armored vehicle and the bomb investigating robot.

"The event is designed to engage students and families in learning about many of the educational and career opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics," said ERS's Michelle French, a STEM/Project Based Learning staff development/curriculum specialist.

Event organizers are seeking exhibitors and vendors in STEM-related fields to join the Central Valley Science Project (a program of the School of Education and Human Development at California State University, Fresno), which will be leading the Maker Space. "Agencies and businesses working in STEM are welcome to come and share their expertise with our audience," said Mrs. French.

For more information on participating in the STEM Expo as an exhibitor or vendor, call Paula Terrill at (559) 651-0565. For more information, visit tcoe.org/STEMExpo, or call Robert Herman, Public Information Officer at (559) 733-6606.

# National Parks Draw Record Crowds

**Staff Reports**

Visitation at America's national parks broke all-time records in 2014, as the National Park Service prepares to celebrate its centennial in 2016 with a major push to encourage more visitors to experience their national parks in 2016. In 2014, there were 292.8 million visits to national parks, breaking the previous record set in 1987, when parks saw just over 287.2 million visits.

"As the National Park Service strives to share a more inclusive and well-rounded version of the American story through the places we care for, it is gratifying to see more people than ever coming to their national parks to enjoy nature, learn about history, and spend time with their families," said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. "As we look ahead to our centennial in 2016, I am looking forward to announcing a new record-breaking number of visitors coming to experience national parks next year and beyond."

The official number of recreational visits to national parks in 2014 was 292,800,082--an increase of 19 million, or 7%, from 2013 visitation of 273,630,895. Visitation in 2014 rebounded from a 2013 decline that included a 16-day government shutdown and many park closures for repairs after Superstorm Sandy hit the northeast in late 2012.

"Visitor spending in the communities near national parks supports hundreds of thousands of mostly local jobs in America year after year," Jarvis said. "With this record visitation we should see something on the order of $15 billion in visitor spending, 250,000 or more jobs and a $28 billion effect on the U.S. economy when our annual economics of national parks report comes out in April."

Several national parks saw record-breaking visitation in 2014, including Joshua Tree, Rocky Mountain, Grand Teton and Glacier national parks. The re-opening of the Washington Monument, some 21 months after it was rocked by an earthquake and repaired, also added to 2014 visitation numbers.

Of the 405 parks in the national park system, 369 of them track visitors, and the top 28 most visited parks accounted for half of 2014 visitation and half of the increase in visits between 2013 and 2014.

Grand Canyon National Park bumped Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area out of the top 10 most visited areas in the national park system. The list of top ten national parks remains unchanged, although Rocky Mountain and Olympic National Parks switched places.

The top 10 most visited national parks:

1. Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 10,099,276
2. Grand Canyon National Park, 4,756,771
3. Yosemite National Park, 3,882,642
4. Yellowstone National Park, 3,513,484
5. Rocky Mountain National Park, 3,434,751
6. Olympic National Park, 3,243,872
7. Zion National Park, 3,189,696
8. Grand Teton National Park, 2,791,392
9. Acadia National Park, 2,563,129
10. Glacier National Park, 2,338,528

Here are the top 10 most visited places in the National Park System:

1. Golden Gate National Recreation Area, 15,004,420
2. Blue Ridge Parkway, 13,941,749
3. Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 10,099,276
4. George Washington Memorial Parkway, 7,472,150
5. Lincoln Memorial, 7,139,072
6. Lake Mead NationalRecreation Area, 6,942,873
7. Gateway National Recreation Area, 6,021,713
8. Natchez Trace Parkway, 5,846,474
9. Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, 5,066,219
10. Grand Canyon National Park, 4,756,771

# Dave Stamey Plays Maverick's March 14

**Staff Reports**

Dave Stamey, Western Music Association (WMA) Entertainer of the Year 2014, will perform at Maverick's Coffee House on Saturday, March 14, 2015 at 7pm $30

Stamey returns after receiving a fourth WMA Entertainer of the Year award in November. Stamey is one of the most popular singer/songwriters out on the circuit today. Besides his forenamed awards he has also won five WMA's Male Performer of the Year and five Songwriter of the Year awards plus a Will Rogers Award from the Academy of Western Artists( AWA) for Male Singer.

Dave Stamey

Stamey lives in Orange Cove with his wife Melissa and granddaughter Haley.

Mavericks has a national reputation of being a venue where the best Cowboy Singers and Poets, and Western Music entertainers look forward to playing in an up front and close to the audience, living room setting.

Performers include Don Edwards and Michael Martin Murphey to the Sons of the San Joaquin and Ian Tyson along with Cowboy Poets such as Randy Rieman and Waddie Mitchell. Stamey is in the same class of these familiar names and the owners are proud and thankful that he is always willing to play at our anniversaries. This year marks the 12th Anniversary of Mavricks.

For ticket information, call 559 624-1400 or stop by Mavericks Coffee House, 238 E. Caldwell Avenue (Court & Caldwell).

# Enjoy Yourself at Lindsay's Friday Night Market

**Staff Reports**

Lindsay's Friday Night Market and Street Faire is more than just your average Farmer's Market. There's much more to see and do every Friday night at Sweet Brier Plaza. Live music and art projects from the local public schools, a flea market with every fare you can think of, and concessions offer something for everyone.

This market opens March 6, and every Friday from 5-10pm at Sweet Brier Plaza, on North Sweet Briar Avenue, between North Westwood Avenue and West Tulare Road, in downtown Lindsay.

Vendors are welcome to apply.

Lindsay's Chamber of Commerce is proud that its market attracts visitors from across the Valley. Virginia Loya, Chamber executive director, says that since the market started in 2004 it has become a gathering place for the whole community. ""It's like a big party every Friday night."

The event provides free entertainment such as dancers, mariachi and country music. Approximately 200 stalls are occupied by food, arts and crafts, consumer goods and produce vendors.

# Education

## Tulare County to Send 20 Projects to State

**Rob Herman**

"Leadership and Legacy in History" was the theme of National History Day - Tulare County held February 24. Tulare County students participating in the event applied the theme to an impressive array of projects celebrating men and women who, through their leadership, changed history.

With the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide approaching, Kings River Union School students Alison Meza, Destiny Meza and Sophia Perez chose to create a group performance on the work of Jakob and Elizabeth Künzler in saving orphans during the genocide.

Sequoia Union's Kiran Dillion presents her junior division individual web site on the late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Entitled "The Legacy of Papa and Mama Künzler and the Armenian Orphan Rug," the girls told the story of how the Künzlers and the Near East Foundation, an American-led relief organization, worked to save thousands of Armenian orphans. With vocational skills training provided at an orphanage in Ghazar, Lebanon, 400 orphaned girls wove a carpet during the course of 18 months and presented it as a gift to U.S. President Calvin Coolidge in appreciation for the nation's relief support.

For their work on the performance, the Kings River students were selected as one of 20 finalists in the competition, making them eligible to compete in the National History Day - California competition May 8-9 at William Jessup University in Rocklin, California. They also received a $250 scholarship from the Tulare County Historical Society.

This year, National History Day - Tulare County received nearly 70 entries from students in grades 4-12. Students chose topics in local, national or world history and explored their significance relative to the annual theme. Students competed in three grade categories: 4-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Students in grades 4-5 competed in the two-dimensional category only. Students in the two upper-grade categories presented findings through one of the following categories: historical paper, exhibit, performance, documentary or historical website. At the event, presentations were evaluated by local historians and educators who looked for a balance of perspectives in the project.

Kings River students Destiny Meza and Sophia Perez (l-r) portray Armenian orphans in their award-winning presentation.

Following their presentations, students heard from Fresno State's Dr. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, who spoke on the 1915 Armenian genocide, which is being commemorated locally and internationally this year. Dr. Der Mugrdechian, who is the coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program and Director of the Center for Armenian Studies at Fresno State University, also told students about the impact Armenian immigrants have had on Central Valley history.

Following Dr. Der Mugrdechian's presentation, the finalists and alternates were announced and the Tulare County Historical Society awarded six scholarships totaling $2,000. The scholarships are given to help students with the cost of entering their projects in the state competition.

"National History Day is 21st century learning at its finest," said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. "Through this event, students are learning skills they can apply in college and career." During the opening of the event, Gay Atmajian, National History Day - Tulare County coordinator, presented Vidak with a plaque honoring him for his "leadership and legacy" in service as Tulare County Superintendent of Schools since 1991.

For a complete list of 2015 National History Day - Tulare County winning projects, visit tcoe.org/HistoryDay.

## Young Authors' Faire Wraps Up March 6

**Staff Reports**

More than 675 elementary and middle school students have displayed their writings at the annual Young Authors' Faire, a free event which is open to the public. The students, representing 21 Tulare County schools, worked alone or in groups to produce 325 print and digital books this year. The books are on display through March 6 in the Elderwood Room of the Tulare County Office of Education's Doe Avenue Complex.

The students write, illustrate and bind traditional stories for the public to read. Students also create digital books utilizing PowerPoint and incorporated hand-drawn and digital photography. Visitors to Young Authors' Faire will be able to enjoy the digital books utilizing laptops set up around the room.

During the week of the exhibition, the public is invited to read and comment on the books. An evening reception was held on Wednesday, March 4, so that the public could meet the young authors and celebrate their successes. Students also had the opportunity to read their books aloud to the audience at the reception.

"By participating in the Young Authors' Faire program, students are building their 21st century learning skills – critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity," says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. "I encourage the public to visit the Faire to read and appreciate these wonderful works!"

For more information, please contact Robert Herman, Public Information Officer at (559) 733-6606.

**EL DIAMANTE HIGH SCHOOL COUNTY ACADEMIC DECATHLON CHAMPIONS**

The EDHS Academic Decathlon Team won the County Academic Decathlon competition and is heading to the state competition. This is the first VUSD Academic Decathlon Team that has won the county award in at least the 20 years. Congratulations to El Diamante's Academic Decathlon Champions and good luck at state!

Pictured above from left to right: Board President Juan Guerrero, Cristian Mascorro, Jack Perez, Teacher and Academic Decathlon Coach Mikk Jolly, Kiley Greenwood, Forrest Johnson, Michael Ngo, Principal Mike Waters, and Superintendent Dr. Craig Wheaton. These students are a few of the team that were able to attend the Board Meeting.

## Middle, High School Students to Pitch to Local Investors

**Staff Reports**

On Thursday March 5 at 6:00 pm student entrepreneurs will take the stage to present their business plans before a panel of local leaders of industry and a public audience. The students, dressed as young professionals, are ready to wow the crowd.

Twelve students in grades 8 through 12 representing seven businesses from the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) hosted by the Visalia and Tulare Chambers of Commerce will have six minutes to pitch their business plans to prominent local members of the business community. The YEA! Investor Panel Event (think Shark Tank) is an annual event for the YEA! program. Based on the appeal and merit of the students' plans and presentations, representatives from companies like Suncrest Bank, Rosa Brothers Milk and Buckman-Mitchell Insurance & Financial Services will determine the amount of funds to allocate to each business.

Participating investors will also select the one business group that will advance to the Young Entrepreneurs Academy Saunders Scholars National College Scholarship competition, where they will compete for hundreds of thousands of dollars in college scholarships, a fast-track application pass to apply to be on ABC's Shark Tank, and an all-expenses paid trip to attend America's Small Business Summit in Washington, DC courtesy of the United States Chamber of Commerce.

The YEA! Investor Panel event is free and open to the public.

The emcee for the evening will be Gail Zurek, CEO, Visalia Chamber of Commerce.

Student businesses include:

- Cote Custom Computer Builds - Jackson Richmond & Lokesh Bhardwaj
- Duality Mark - Miriam Aldana, Joshua Mendonca, Brandon Pelaiz & Zaida Rojas
- Mama Hannah's Sugar House - Hannah Gladden
- Ocegura Salsa - Edgar Godinez
- Photo's Evolved - Jack Johnson
- Quickfeet Athletics - Jordan Fuse
- Three Leaves Eatery - Ezra Monroy & Joanna Zegarra

The Investor Panel will be comprised of prominent local business people, including: Ciaran McMullen, President/CEO, Suncrest Bank; Judy Fussel, President and COO, Buckman-Mitchell Insurance & Financial Services; Deanne Martin-Soares, CEO, Amdal In-Home Care; Noel Rosa, President, Rosa Brothers Milk Company; Harvey May, President, Paloma Development; Lionel Pires, President, CEO TF Tires & Service

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is a groundbreaking and exciting yearlong class that transforms middle and high school students into real, confident entrepreneurs. Throughout the class, students develop business ideas, write business plans, conduct market research, pitch their plans to a panel of investors, and actually launch and run their own real, legal, fully formed companies and social movements.

# Unique Community Radio Station Opens

**Dave Adalian**

A new breed of nonprofit radio has taken to the airwaves in Kings County, with a veteran husband-and-wife team at the helm who want to revive hometown broadcasting through community service and rock-and-roll.

KFUN, on the dial at 92.5 FM, sparked to life November 1, 2014, without DJs, playing a wide mix of classic rock from the 1950's forward and taking in listener feedback.

"We went on like a jukebox and got a great response," said Denise White, the station's president and CEO. "We were taking requests, trying to get an idea of what people want to hear."

The format now includes live DJs playing a wide range of acts, but focusing on deeper cuts from familiar artists that mainstream radio usually doesn't play. Sticking with the idea of interacting with its listeners, the station takes requests at 839-KFUN (5386).

Joey Joslin broadcasting from the Smoke Joint BBQ in Hanford.

"We've got a really wide library. We include it all in there," said White, emphasizing their playlist provides a wider range than the Valley's other classic rock stations. "They play the same 60 to 70 songs over and over. You hear the same song every day at 1 o'clock. We really step it up."

Besides having a unique FCC license as one of only seven low-powered community stations in the nation, KFUN is one of only two stations with its broadcast studio inside a working restaurant. The request lines open for the live, local morning show at 6 a.m. at the Smoke Joint BBQ, 102 W. 7th St. Restaurant owner Stan Houseworth takes to air from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. with the Lunch with Stan Show. Joey Joslin goes live 2-6 p.m. for Afternoons with the Marshall, and White's husband, Chris Edwards White, rounds out the local schedule with an all-request show -- Kings County Rocks with Chris Edwards -- until midnight. Weekends feature local business, music and religious programming, as well as Chris White's nationally broadcast show.

The Whites own eight stations total, including broadcasting in San Francisco, Firebaugh and Dos Palos, but the Clovis couple became attached to Hanford through their friendship with Houseworth, and they wanted to do something special there.

"This is a little different station," said Chris White, who retired as vice president of CBS Radio's West Coast operations in 2005. "We decided to give back to Hanford. The whole idea is instead of going out and selling a lot of advertising, giving back to the community."

While KFUN will sell ads and accept donations to pay the bills, much of the airtime between songs will be given over to promoting local charities. KFUN has already begun partnering with local clubs and organizations for live broadcasts from their events, and a charity concert is planned for June, though details are still under wraps.

"Big, big artists," Chris White promised.

While the station uses the KFUN call sign, its official FCC designation is KOAD, which longtime Kings County residents remember as a rock station from the 1960's and '70s, that featured DJ Mel Semis and hosted his Melco Dances each Saturday night at the Hanford Civic Auditorium.

"People go, 'Oh, yeah, we remember you!'" Denise White said.

To capitalize on that nostalgia, KFUN hopes to soon host a similar weekly rock-and-roll dance party. The station will also broadcast live from the Farmers Market, and the Whites plan to put local, live sports back on the air beginning in September.

"On Friday nights, we'll have high school football back," said Chris White. "We haven't had that in years."

For more information about KFUN's community programs, events and to listen live online, visit kfunradio.com.

# March CHAP Looks at the Great War and Climate Change

**Staff Reports**

Porterville College's Cultural Historical Awareness Program (CHAP) will continue its spring schedule at 7pm on Friday, March 13 in the PC Theater with "A Century of Disaster: The Dark Legacy of the Great War" presented by PC History Professor Jay Hargis.

In 1914 Europeans rushed to destroy their world in what we now call World War I.

During the next four years more and more parts of the world, including the United States, were drawn into this conflict.

The myth of the war is that it ended in victory in 1918, but in truth, the problems it created and/or failed to solve have smoldered on over a century to the present day. Its legacy of death, disease and continuing conflict threaten us all.

The talk will take place from 7-8pm in the PC Theater--100 East College Avenue, Porterville--is open to the public and free to attend. Parking permits will not be required for the event.

On Friday, March 20 there will be a CHAP talk entitled "Climate and Ancient Civilizations: An Archaeologist Looks at Cooling and Warming" with Professor Emeritus at UC Santa Barbara, Dr. Brian Fagen.

Did climatic shifts collapse civilizations? How did rising sea levels affect history? Have El Niños changed human societies beyond recognition? Dr. Fagen, renowned author and archaeologist, takes us on a 10,000 year journey as he describes the complex relationships between a wide variety of human societies and long- and short-term climate change. He shows us how today's warming world has roots that go back deep into the past. The talk will take place from 7-8pm in the PC Theater.

Rounding out the presentations will be a special lunchtime--11:30am-12:30pm--talk on Wednesday, March 25 in the PC Theater titled "From Home Front to Front Lines: Women and the Great War" presented by PC History Professor Rebecca Baird.

The First World War marked a transformation in women's lives, both in Europe and in the United States. Societal norms were turned upside-down as women flooded the workforce and gained new political rights. The Great War touched women's lives in profound ways, altering their place in society and opening the path for continued change.

The Porterville College Cultural and Historical Awareness Program (CHAP) was organized in 2002 to enhance students' awareness of certain important aspects of our society to which they may previously have had little or no exposure. A theme is chosen by CHAP members each school year, and faculty members across the campus are encouraged to integrate elements of that theme into their coursework. Additionally, a variety of field trips, guest speakers, panel discussions and videos are presented throughout the year and are all open to the public. For more information about CHAP call Richard Osborne at (559) 791-2298.

# Calendar

**Through March 14: 7th Annual Miniatures Works of Art**
The Tulare City Historical Society will host this exhibition at the Tulare Historical Museum, 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare. The museum is open 10-4pm Thursday through Saturday.

**Through March 15: Cabrillo Civic Club Scholarship Applications**
Cabrillo Civic Clubs of California are now accepting scholarship applications from high school seniors who meet the following criteria: Portuguese descent, US citizenship or permanent residency, a GPA of 3.5 or higher. For more information contact Dulcie Nunes at 559-688-8070. Applications may also be submitted online by visiting www.cabrillocivicclubs.org/scholarship.

**Through March 24: Teen Fiction Writers' Workshop, 4-5:30pm**
Local author Janet Nichols Lynch will conduct a Tulare County Office of Education Workshop on Tuesdays at 7000 Doe Ave., Suite A, Visalia. Students, grades 7-12, may apply by submitting a short story or novel except, 500 to 3,000 words, to janetl@ersconnect.org. The deadline for submissions is Jan. 16.

**Through March: The Photography of Deborah Nolan**
Photography 20"x30" by Deborah Nolan is on display at Sue Sa's Club House Deli located at 699 West Center Avenue, Visalia.

**Through June: Visalia Branch Library Teen Homework Center, 3-6:30pm**
The Visalia Branch Library offers a place for teens to do their homework Tuesdays through Fridays. The library is located at 200 W. Oak St.

**Through June: Tulare Public Library Homework Help**
Homework help for children in grades K-12 will be available in the Tulare Public Library Learning Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4-7pm and Saturdays from 1-4pm.

**Through October 28: Free Fly Casting Instruction, 6-7pm**
Kaweah Fly Fishers are offering fly casting lessons at Del Lago Park in Tulare every Wednesday evening until October 28. Rods and reels will be supplied or you may bring your own.

**March 5: Student Art Show Opens, 4-6pm**
Tulare Historical Museum will open its annual Student Art Show with a reception for the students and their families at the Heritage Art Gallery, 444 W. Tulare Ave. The show will run through April 4. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

**March 6: Business Seminar Series Team Building, 3:30-5pm**
At the train depot/Lemoore Chamber. Tickets $15 for members, $20 for non-members. For more information call (559) 924-6401.

**March 6**: **Tulare County Fair Fundraiser featuring Johnny Cash Tribute, 6-9pm**
Friends of the Tulare County Fair will host a fundraiser featuring the James Garner Tribute to Johnny Cash on Friday, March 6, at the Tulare County Fairgrounds.The evening begins with a social hour at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 7 and a live auction with auctioneer David Macedo. The revived nonprofit foundation held a fundraiser last year that made possible the paving of the fairgrounds, much-needed improvements to the show barn and landscaping, and the popular Buttercup the Cow display. Proceeds from the 2015 fundraiser will help support 4H and FFA youth and make possible additional grounds improvements for the Tulare County Fair, Sept. 16-20.

**March 6-7: 10th Annual Father Daughter Dance, 6-9pm**
Visalia Parks and Recreation have named the theme for this year's Father Daughter Dance as "The Rockin' 50s" and it is a sock hop for girls ages 4-16. Live music, finger foods and complimentary photograph. Cost is $50 per couple, $25 per additional guest. The event will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information, visit liveandplayvisalia.com.

**March 7 & 8: Tulare Sci-Fi Con**
A pop-culture convention that welcomes all genres will be held at the International Agri-Center to benefit the Tulare Library Children's Section. Vendors, artists fan groups and others can download exhibitor applications at tularescificon.org. For information, visit facebook.com/tularescificon.

**March 7: Selma Swap Meet, 6am-3pm**
The 9th annual Selma Swap, known as a "big boy toy" swap meet, will be held at the Selma Flea Market at Highway 99 and Mountain View Avenue. The event features cars, boats, go-carts, new and antique car parts, motorcycle parts and more, along with food booths and a variety of collectibles. Parking is free; admission is $5 per person. Children 12 and under are admitted free of charge when accompanied by an adult. For directions and details, visit selmaswap.com or call 896-3243

**March 7: Porterville College Athletic Hall of Fame, 5:30pm**
Dr. Horace Mitchell, president of CSU Bakersfield, will be the featured speaker at the Porterville College Athletic Hall of Fame Dinner. Tickets are $50, $275 for a table of six or $350 for a table of eight. For information, call 791-2319.

**March 7: Dinner, Dance & Silent Auction, 5:30-11pm**
Sponsored by the Central Valley Vietnam Veterans, dine and dance the night away at the Visalia Veteran's Memorial Building. No-host cocktails can be enjoyed from 5:50-6:30, followed by dinner at 7:00. Between 8 and 11, dance to the sounds of Soul Patrol. Tickets are $35/person or $280/table. For more information or tickets, call 559-684-0552.6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

**March 7: Dreambuilders' Masquerade Bash, 6-10pm**
Come out and support ImagineU at the 3rd annual Dreambuilders' Bash at the Moulin Rouge. This event will be held at the Visalia Country Club. Join the Masquerade Party, enjoy interactive entertainment and don't forget to try your luck at the roulette wheel for exciting prizes. Cocktails from 6 - 7, Dinner at 7:00. Silent and Live auction. For more information call 559-733-5972.

**March 7: Visalia Elks Lodge #1298 Annual Wine and Gourmet Food Tasting, 6-9pm**
Join the Elks for their 11th annual fundraiser. 100% of the proceeds are split between CASA of Tulare County and the Elks Purple Pig charity, which provides no-cost physical and speech therapy for children (one does not need to be an Elks member to benefit from this service). Tickets are $30 per person. For more information call Laurel Flores 559.284.0044 or laurelb@lightspeed.net.

**March 7: Eroica, 7:30pm**
Old and new meet in this Tulare County Symphony Orchestra concert with Beethoven's "Eroica" combined with today's hottest living composers like Tan Dan's "You Tube Symphony." The concert will be held at the Visalia Fox Theatre. For information, visit tularecountysymphony.com.

**March 9: Great Conversations--TBA, 4-5:30pm**
A discussion TBA will take place on the COS main campus in Hospital Rock 133.

**March 12: Tulare Kings Mensa Meeting, 5:30pm**
The South Valley's high IQ society, will meet at Panera Bread (near Target), 4103 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia, on Thursday, March 12, at 5:30pm, for coffee, bagels, sandwiches and conversation. Prospective members encouraged to attend. For more info, call (559) 280-9774.

**March 13 & 14: World of Outlaws STP Sprint Car Series**
World of Outlaws STP Sprint Car Series, King of the West 410 Sprint Car Series and USAC West Coast 360 Sprint Cars will be held at Thunderbowl Raceway at Tulare Fairgrounds. For information, visit www.thunderbowlraceway.com.

**March 13-15, 19-22: The Addams Family, 7:30pm except 15 & 22 (2pm matinee)**
COS Music Theatre presents The Addams Family. General admission $24; Students and Seniors, $20. Visit costheatre.org or call 559-730-3907.

**March 14: Mensa Testing Session, 10am-noon**
American Mensa Chair Dan Burg will conduct the Mensa Test in the Purple Room of the Tulare Public Library in Visalia on Saturday, March 14, from 10am to noon. The fee for the proctored IQ testing session --an opportunity to find out how smart you really are --is $40 and reservations are required. For more info, call (559) 280-9774.

**March 14: Celebrate The Life Of Senaida Garcia, 11:30am-2:30pm**
You are invited to celebrate the life of Senaida Garcia, a community activist -- a woman who was the first Latina of many accomplishments in Tulare County -- at the Lamp Liter Inn. Presentation by Dr. Robert Aguiar. To RSVP, call 559-635-2465 or 559-562-4111.

**March 14: Noche de Cultura, 6-10pm**
The Professional Latin American Association presents a night of culture featuring the "Mexican Muralism Movement" at the Civic Auditorium in Hanford. There will be dinner, awards, a cultural fashion show and a silent auction. All proceeds beneft Kings CASA. Tickets--which include dinner--are $50 each. For tickets or more information call (559) 582-7515.

**March 14: Tulare County Farm Bureau Annual Education and Scholarship Gala, 6:15-10pm**
Those looking to support youth in agriculture are invited to attend Tulare County Farm Bureau's Annual Education and Scholarship Gala fundraiser on Saturday, March 14 at the Visalia Convention Center. This fun-filled evening includes fine dining, an exciting wine and jewelry drawing and premier entertainment provided by singer Nick Palance; Nick has been called the "American Andre Bocelli" with his amazing voice and opera and pop talents. The event begins with a cocktail reception at 6:15 pm, followed by a steak and lobster dinner. Tickets are $100 each and available at the Farm Bureau office on Ben Maddox way in Visalia.

**March 14: Lemoore Barn Dance & Pot Luck, 7-10pm**
Bring your favorite pot luck dish to share at the Lemoore Senior Center, 798 South 18th Ave., Lemoore. Try your luck in a raffle and dance to the music of the Mussel Slough Band and the Country By Design Band. Tickets are $5 in advance or $7 at the door. For more information call 924-7791.

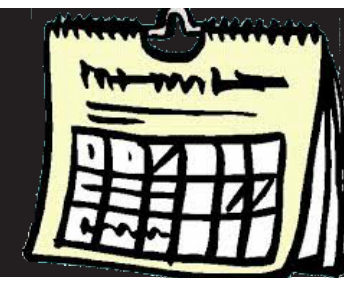
**March 14: Dave Stamey, 7pm**
Mavericks Coffee House will celebrate its 12th anniversary with a concert featuring Dave Stamey. Tickets are $30. For information, visit mavericksccoffeehouse.com.

**March 15: "Reliance" 6pm**
The First Baptist Church of Dinuba is pleased to be hosting a Southern Gospel music concert on Sunday March 15, 2015 at 6:00pm featuring "Reliance". This trio sings both conventional Southern Gospel and includes more modern "gospel" songs they have written themselves! Last but not least one of the trio plays an awesome piano. Their music ministry brings praise and worship of our Lord. Free admission! A free-will offering will be taken for the ministry of Reliance. For more information, please call Dennis at (559) 643-0676.

**March 16: An Irish Hooley, 6:30pm**
Seven musicians of Slugger O'Toole and step dances from the Kerry Dance Troupe will perform at the Visalia Fox Theater. Tickets, $19-$35, are available at foxvisalia.org.

**March 17: American Legion Post 100 Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner, 5-pm**
At 411 W. D Street in Lemoore. Tickets--$10 per person--available until March 10. Call 639-3934 or 707-4840.

**March 19: Free Immigration Legal Clinic, 11am-3pm**
OneJustice's Justice Bus Project is partnering with Family Services and the UFW



Foundation to offer a free legal clinic for individuals in need of assistance with immigration-related issues. At the clinic, volunteer law students and expert attorneys will meet one-on-one with clients to screen for common forms of immigration relief and discuss immigration options. The clinic is scheduled for Thursday, March 19 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Goshen Village Apartments II Community Room, 31114 Road 72 in Goshen. Space is limited. The public can call Family Services' Goshen Family Center at (559) 735-8173 to make an appointment. For more information about Family Services, visit www.fstc.net For more information about OneJustice, visit http://www.one-justice.org

**March 20: 7th Annual Visalia Chamber Leadership Golf Tournament, 10:30am**
Registration begins at 10:30am at the Valley Oaks Golf Course, with a 12:01pm Shotgun Start of 4-person scrambles. Practice balls, cart & green fees included, and lunch is provided. 20% off at Pro Shop on golf day only. Raffle tickets $1 each or 6 for $5.00; Mulligan $5 each--limit 2; Bump-up $5 each--per player, entire team must participate.1st Place, $500; 2nd Place, $200; 3rd Place, $100.

**March 20: 26th Annual Friday Night Live Lip Sync Contest, 6-9pm**
The Tulare County Office of Education sponsors a lip sync contest broken down into four categories: lip sync, dance, showcase and novelty. For more information visit Gene at genem@tcoe.org

**March 21 & 22: Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show, 10am**
The 7th Annual Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show will be held at Trinity Hall, 470 Champion St., Lemoore. Food, beverages, door prizes, kids activities and gems and minerals from around the world are featured. For information, call 309-3433.

**March 21: Spring Kids Fest, 12-3:30pm**
Kids can enjoy rides, special performances and games at Hidden Valley Park. Admission is $3 prior to and $5 on the day of the event. For more info and performance schedules visit www.cityofhanfordca.com

**March 21: The Count Basie Orchestra, 7:30pm**
The 19-piece orchestra will perform at the Visalia Fox Theatre, 300 W. Main St., Visalia. For information, visit foxvisalia.org.

**March 21: Hanford Comedy Jam, 9pm**
Located inside the Hanford Mall, Que Pasa Mexican Cafe presents a night of comedy for those over 21. Tickets are $10. For more information call (559) 584-0444.

**March 23: Great Conversations-- excerpts from *Pensées*, 4-5:30pm**
A discussion of this Great Work by Pascal will take place on the COS main campus in Hospital Rock 133.

**March 24: Children's Book Drive, 11am-5pm**
At the Exeter library children's books will be the focus of a book drive, but other donations-- paperbacks, hardcovers, magazines & the like--would also be appreciated.

**March 27 to May 22: Personal Finance, 3-5pm**
The Visalia Branch Library will offer classes on "Stretching the Food Dollar" every other Friday in the Blue Room. Registration is not required.

**March 28: 2nd Annual Library For London 5K/Kids' 1K & Festival, 8:30am**

Join us for our 2nd Annual Library for London 5K/Kid's 1K and Festival on Saturday March 28th, 2015 at 8:30 AM in our beautiful community of London, CA.

March 28: March on Main Street, 9-11am
April is National Child Abuse Prevention Awareness month. CASA of Tulare County and the Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council would like you to join us as we kick of child abuse prevention awareness month. At Garden St. Plaza there will be a short program and information booths from collaborative agencies as well as face painting for the kids!

**March 28: Lawn-Free Garden Tour, 9am-3pm**
Sequoia Garden Club in Visalia invites you to a garden tour with a twist--featuring only yards without lawns. Come see stellar examples of water-wise landscapes, and imagine beautiful ideas for your own yard. In the midst of an historic drought, we offer five gardens, with five approaches to turning a landscape from a guzzler into a sipper. Call 733-4832 for tickets ($15 in advance, $20 on tour day, if not sold out).

**March 28: Hanford Carnegie Museum League "Homes of Distinction" Tour, 4:30-8pm**
From 4:30-6pm there will be a reception at the museum, after which--between 6 & 8pm--there will be a home tour throughout Hanford. Tickets are $40 single and $75 for couples, available at the museum, 109 E. 8th Street, Hanford, or at 584-1367. Check and credit card accepted. The event is a benefit for the museum.

# APRIL

**April 1: Party in the Park, 4-6pm**
Free Games, Bounce Houses and prizes! Food for sale to raise money for a new playground at Houston School.

**April 2: A Community Forum--Envisioning Lemoore's Future, 6pm**
The Lemoore Chamber of Commerce will hold a forum at the Train Depot for the public to bring ideas for future retail development in Lemoore.

**April 4: Color Vibe 5K -- Visalia, 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM**
Come get C R A Z Y with us!!! The Color Vibe is coming to Visalia on April 4th and wants you to experience the most #VIBErant 5k of all time! Grab your friends and family and join us as we blast you with lots of fun, epic beats and TONS OF COLOR while you run/walk our course. Children 12 and under are FREE! You'll come as a blank canvas and leave a colorful mural!! A portion of our proceeds will also go towards a local charity, Pro Youth Heart! Sign up now before spots fill up! http://www.thecolorvibe.com/visalia.php# #ColorVibeVisalia

**April 8: 50+Rocks Spring Open House, 11am-2pm**
The Visalia Parks and Recreation Department announces the 50+Rocks Spring Open House at the Visalia Senior Center. The event is free for seniors (except for the $3.50 barbecue) and brings together seniors and the vendors which offer services for them. Please call 713-4381 to get an application for a vendor booth.

**April 10-12: Jazzaffair Music Festival**
Join us for the 42nd annual Jazzaffair in Three Rivers! This 3 day festival of traditional Dixieland jazz music is one you won't want to miss. Purchase a ticket for the whole event, or just one day. This year's theme is "Jazz for the Generations". Bring your child, any age, and receive their ticket at half price (children under 12 free)! Find all the details and purchase tickets at www.Jazzaffair.info.

**April 12: Celebrant Singers Bowl-a-thon, 1pm**
At AMF Visalia Lanes, 1740 W. Caldwell Ave., check in begins at 1:00 p.m. and the Opening Ceremony is at 2:00 p.m. This is an annual fundraiser to help send Celebrant teams on their International Missions outreaches to Guatemala, El Salvador and Turkey. All members of the community are invited to participate by sponsoring a lane, forming a team, signing up individually to bowl, or sponsoring a bowler. Each sponsored bowler receives a free t-shirt and is eligible to win prizes donated by local businesses. Bowlers raise money through "per pin" pledges or flat donations and will bowl three games. For more information visit www.celebrants.org/bowlathon or call 559-740-4000.

**April 13: Great Conversations--"Self Reliance", 4-5:30pm**
A discussion of this Great Work by Emerson will take place on the COS main campus in Hospital Rock 133.

**April 15 to April 18: Anything Goes**
Golden West High School will present the classical musical about the age-old tale of boy meets girl. More than 115 students will participate. For information, visit www.vusd.org

**April 17 to 26: The Fantastic Mr. Fox**
The Enchanted Playhouse presents "The Fantastic Mr. Fox." The play will be presented on Friday and Saturday at 7pm, and Sunday at 2pm at Main Street Theatre, 307 E. Main, Visalia. For information, visit enchantedplayhouse.org.

**April 17: 2nd Annual Hands In the Community Golf Tournament, 12-5pm**
Hands in the Community will hold its second annual golf tournament at Valley Oaks Golf Course. Lunch provided. Raffle Tickets, Mulligan, Putting contest extra. $400.00 per Golf Team 1 Hole Sponsor $150.00 2 Hole Sponsor $250.00. For more information contact Lester Moon 559-625-3822.

**April 18: Colossal Collage, 7:30pm**
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra closes out its season with the "other" great Symphony No. 5, the one by Mahler. The concert will be held at the Visalia Fox Theatre. For information, visit tularecountysymphony.com.

**April 22: Labor Law Compliance Series, 7-10am.**
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with Pacific Employers, will present the state-mandated Supervisors' Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Seminar & Workshop at the Lamp Liter Inn. Registration & Breakfast 7:30-8 am; Seminar 8-10am. Reservations required. For more information call the Chamber, 734-5876.

**April 22 to May 1: Treasures of Ireland**
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce offers this group trip, which includes airfare, 11 meals and a professional travel guide. For information, call 734-5876.

**April 23: Honor A Hero, Hire A Vet Job & Resource Fair, 9am-2pm**
For Veterans, Military, National Guard, Reservist and their dependants, this year's job fair will be held in the Golden Eagle Arena at West HillsCollegeLemoore-campus,locatedat555CollegeAvenue in Lemoore. For more information call James Bradford at (559) 852-2151.

**April 25: Civil War 360 Sprint Car Series**
Civil War 360 Sprint Car Series presented by Flowmaster will be held at Thunderbowl Raceway at Tulare Fairgrounds. Western RaceSaver Sprints and Vintage Cars will also be held. For information, visit www.thunderbowlraceway.com.

**April 27: Great Conversations--"Out of the Cradle, Endlessly Rocking", 4-5:30pm**
A discussion of this Great Work by Whitman will take place on the COS main campus in Hospital Rock 133.

# MAY

**May 2: USAC Western Midgets**
USAC Western Midgets, Vintage Cars and Western RaceSaver Sprints will be held at Thunderbowl Raceway at Tulare Fairgrounds. For information, visit www.thunderbowlraceway.com.

**May 8: Business Seminar Series Diversity Training, 3:30-5pm**
At the train depot/Lemoore Chamber. Tickets $15 for members, $20 for non-members. For more information call (559) 924-6401.

**May 9: Barks & Bourbon, 5:30-10pm**
Friends of Tulare Animal Services is having its First Annual Barks & Bourbon to be held on May 9,2015, at Heritage Center Social Hall. Friends of Tulare Animals Services is the non-profit arm of Tulare Animal Services. We are a 501(c)(3), and are totally self funded through donations. We are raising funds to support our growing rescue efforts of shelter animals. Contributions to Friends of Tulare Animal Services are fully tax-deductible.

# Sports

## College of the Sequoias Women's Basketball Off to the Tournament

**Stefan Barros**

The College of the Sequoias Women's Basketball team, the Lady Giants, is riding high into the playoffs as the No. 1 ranked team in Northern California and the No. 2 ranked team in the state.

With a 27-3 overall record, Head Coach Ray Alvarado is pleased with his team's success this year because they been able to reach all of the goals they have set out to achieve thus far. Before the season started, Alvarado set five goals for his team to achieve this season.

"We wanted to win 25 games, which isn't easy," he said, "and we did that. We wanted to win the conference and we did that. We wanted to get scholarships for the sophomores, which we've done, and we wanted to get to the state tournament."

Alvarado feels good about his team heading into the playoffs. "We have experienced players and that makes for more comfort in the playoffs," he said. "But we still have to make sure we take it one game at a time."

"We need to be able to focus on the moment and don't get too far ahead of ourselves. Like in the playoffs of any sport we'll need a little bit of luck, but focus is crucial."

Of the 27 wins that the Lady Giants have racked up this season, Alvarado believes that one victory stands out, serving as a springboard for the rest of the season. "The win against Long Beach stood out because it was early on in the season. They were a high ranked team and we were physically outmatched. That win affirmed what we thought about us as a team. It got us on a run as we went on to win that tournament and the next."

The Lady Giants faced a brief moment of adversity due to an injury earlier in the season, but got through it.

"Things have fallen into place," Alvarado explained, "but earlier in the season we did lose one of our starting guards, Tiana Henry, to injury. It was a bit of downer at the time, but we got her back recently and it's been huge."

As far as the players are concerned, there have been some surprising contributors in this 2014-15 campaign.

"My usual performers have done their part this year, so no surprises there," the coach said. "But Priscilla Wright, Alex Tobie and Latique Walton have surprised me this year. A year ago they weren't expected to play, but have helped greatly this year."

For a team to accomplish what the Lady Giants have done this season, sophomore leaders need to pace the team--and there has been no shortage of sophomore leaders on this team, according to Alvarado.

"Vanessa Mancera has been our leader, been our team leader from the get-go. We also have Corissa Turley and Hannah Ramirez, who are the pillars of our team."

As a leader of the team and the point guard, Mancera is always directing traffic for the Lady Giants' offense.

"I like to get us going on offense, and keep up the pace of the game," she said.

She also has big goals for her team during the playoffs, "We set out five goals before the season, and we want to win state," she said.

Coach Alvarado does see this year being a success regardless of how his team fares during the playoffs. He just wants to focus on what his team has already accomplished.

"It's been a great year. I'm not worried about the outcome, just enjoying the journey," he said.

The Lady Giants opened the playoffs on February 28 in their own Porter Fieldhouse, outpacing West Hills College by 30 points, 102-72.

Daryn Pittman. Photo courtesy Tear-Off Heaven Fotos/Thunderbowl Raceway

## Former World of Outlaws Champ Looks for Continued Success

**Gary Thomas**

Former World of Outlaws (WOO) Sprint Car Series champion Daryn Pittman earned the first Merle Stone Chevrolet Thunderbowl Raceway victory of his career last year and will be gunning to keep up his recent string of successes at the track on Friday and Saturday, March 13 and 14.

The 2013 WOO titlist got around Hanover, Pennsylvania's Logan Schuchart on lap 23 and led the final 12 circuits in the feature on opening night last season.

Pittman has raced to top-five finishes in three of the last four WOO events at Merle Stone Chevrolet Thunderbowl Raceway. The Owasso, Oklahoma speedster also came close to victory at the one-third mile oval in 2004, only to have a right rear tire go flat coming for the checkered, which allowed Terry McCarl the chance to sneak by for the win off turn four in dramatic fashion.

"This track has been kind of a voodoo place for me where I've never felt comfortable at, and then last year we came here and ran third & fifth and did really well," Pittman said following the victory. "To snap our non-winning streak here in Tulare, I'll tell you what, I couldn't be any happier."

The driver of the Kasey Kahne Racing/Great Clips No. 9 machine captured a career high 14 main event wins en route to a runner-up finish in the WOO Sprint Car Series standings last season.

Pittman claimed the season opener last week at Volusia Speedway Park and currently sits third in series points, six markers back of teammate Brad Sweet with three rounds complete. He also took home the overall title at the five-race Dirt Car Nationals Sprint Week in Volusia.

Pittman has routinely been solid while competing in the Golden State over the years and is a past winner of the prestigious Gold Cup Race of Champions at Silver Dollar Speedway in Chico, as well as the former Harvest Classic at the Calistoga Speedway. His victory at the Gold Cup in 2006 paid a handsome $50,000 and came aboard the Titan Garages No. 21 Sprint Car that season.

Pittman was also victorious in last year's Sunday evening finale at Calistoga in April and finished second at the Gold Cup in September.

Tickets for the March 13 and 14 World of Outlaws/King of the West Series combined event are available by contacting the box office at (559) 688-0909.

All seating is reserved in the house for the weekend. Also competing both nights are the USAC West Coast Wingless 360 Sprint Car Series and on Saturday the Western RaceSaver Sprints make their debut.

The front gate will open at 4pm both nights with racing scheduled to fire-off around 7pm. All seating is reserved during the weekend with Bleacher tickets costing $40 and Grandstand seats $45 each night.

A seating chart, as well as hotel info is available online at www.thunderbowlraceway.com

Information on the World of Outlaws Sprint Car Series can be found online at www.woosprint.com and info on the King of the West 410 Sprint Car Series can be found at www.racepmg.com.

**WOO** continued on **28** »

## Rawhide Unveil New Road Uniforms

**Donny Baarns**

The Visalia Rawhide officially released its new away uniforms for 2015 and beyond, as the team will proudly wear "Visalia" on their chests for the first time since 2008.

The grey jerseys, which feature a roping "Visalia" script similar to the "Rawhide" wordmark, will be the team's new standard look on the road. It will be the first time in the Rawhide Era that the team has worn the city's name on their uniforms.

"When our team is playing in other places throughout the California League, we want them to visibly display the fact that they're representing our amazing town," said Rawhide General Manager Jennifer Pendergraft. "We have so much pride in this hidden gem of a city, with its vibrant downtown, its unique culture, and its proximity to beautiful national parks, and now the Rawhide will be showcasing that pride everywhere they go."

The new wordmark was crafted by world-renowned graphic artist Dan Simon, who has designed multiple Super Bowl logos and created full identities for dozens of professional sports teams, including the Rawhide.

"Showing the city's name on our chests demonstrates our continuing commitment to making professional baseball thrive in Visalia," Rawhide President Tom Seidler said. "As one of the smallest towns in the country to field a professional sports club, our people and our fans embrace this area's constant underdog status. This new road uniform will only enhance that pride."

In conjunction with the new uniform's release, the Rawhide are pleased to offer several new "Visalia" merchandise items in their online shop (available by clicking the "Shop" link at RawhideBaseball.com) and in their General Store at the ballpark. Fans can now show their city spirit by wearing the new logo themselves.

The Rawhide open their 2015 season (and the defense of their Northern Division Championship) on Thursday, April 9 at Rawhide Ballpark against High Desert.

# Great Conversations

## Montaigne's *Essays*: A Study of the Self

**Joseph R. Teller**

If we are readers at all, we are well acquainted with the essay form: for when we read the pages of a newspaper (like you're doing now), an article in a magazine or journal, a memoire by a celebrity, or even our favorite blog, we are in fact reading an essay. Most of us have probably written essays ourselves—even if our only experience is producing one for a stuffy English teacher like me. But where did the essay come from?

Scholars typically credit the French Renaissance writer, Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), with inventing the essay. Well-read in classical and contemporary literature and philosophy, Montaigne set out to do something no one else had done before: write at length about himself and his thoughts on pretty much everything.

Over the course of several decades, he composed over a hundred of these short *essais*, or "attempts," which reflected in a deeply personal way on a variety of topics, including titles as diverse as "On Ancient Customs," "Of Conscience," "On Drunkenness," "One Man's Profit is Another Man's Loss," "Of Thumbs," and "On the Art of Conversation." No matter the topic, though, Montaigne's ultimate subject is himself: "Here I want to be seen in my simple, natural, everyday fashion…for it is my own self that I am painting," he writes in the introduction to the *Essais*; "I myself am the subject of my book." From the time of their first publication in 1580, Montaigne's *Essais* inspired writers across Europe, including thinkers such as Francis Bacon and René Descartes.

Our group discussed two of Montaigne's essays, "Of Friendship" and "Of Solitude." The discussion began with a question that gets at one of the first problems modern readers experience when reading the *Essais*: does Montaigne contradict himself? On the one hand, he claims in "Of Friendship" that his own experience of true friendship (with fellow writer Étienne de la Boétie) involved the absolute melding of the two men's wills: "I know not what quintessence of all this mixture…led [my will] to plunge itself in his; which, having seized his whole will, led it to plunge and lose itself in mine…for neither of us reserved anything for himself, nor was anything either his or mine." On the other hand, he suggests in "Of Solitude" that "We must untie these bonds that are so powerful, and henceforth love this and that, but be wedded only to ourselves…[t]he greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to oneself."

After exploring the nuances of Montaigne's thinking on friendship and solitude, the group tentatively concluded that, first, Montaigne's purposes in these essays is not absolute consistency, but a probing exploration of his own psyche and developing attitudes; and second, intense, non-sexual friendship and a thirst for introspective solitude might be dispositions suited to different periods in our lives, the former, perhaps, to the energy and dynamism of youth, and the latter—with its stoic detachment from the world—to retirement.

With the *Essais* including more than 100 such pieces, any reader can find something of interest. But "Of Friendship" and "Of Solitude" are among the most probing, making us think deeply about our relationships. What, exactly, makes a true friendship? What distinguishes friendship from erotic love, or from simple acquaintanceship? In what ways is "solitude" an attitude one can bring into a friendship, rather than mere aloneness? To what extent is self-knowledge a requirement for knowing others—and to what extent do we gain knowledge of ourselves through our friends?

## Porterville College 2015 Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame Recipient is Dr. Robert Aguilar

The Porterville College Foundation would like to congratulate Dr. Robert Aguilar for being chosen as the 2015 PC Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame recipient. He will be honored along with his fellow inductees at the Hall of Fame Induction Banquet on Saturday, March 7 at the River Island Country Club.

Dr. Robert Aguilar

The retired superintendent of the Delano School District, Dr. Robert Aguilar was a product of Delano schools and would later return as a faculty and administrator, stating he wanted to give back to the community that gave so much to him. Dr. Aguilar attended Porterville College from 1956 to 1958. While at PC he was heavily involved in student activities including student government, the Football Club, the Circle K Club, Inter-council Club Council and the California Student Teachers Association. He also played baseball for the Pirates under Coach Jacobs, who listed Aguilar as one of the "most effective hitters."

After graduating from PC he transferred to California State University Fresno where he earned his B.A. in Education (1962) and then California State University San Jose where he earned his M.A. in Administration and Instruction (1972). He received his Doctorate (Ed.D) in Administration and Curriculum in 1976 from University of the Pacific.

Dr. Aguilar co-founded the Association of Mexican American Educators in 1965 and the California Association of Latino School Administrators in 1977. He served as the president of the California Hispanic Superintendents Association and as a board member of the Visalia Unified School District from 1978-1986. In 1986, The Executive Education 100 recognized him as one of the 100 Outstanding School Executives in North America. Additionally, Dr. Aguilar was recognized as Administrator of the Year by the Association of California School Administrators, Region 14, Superintendent of the Year and by the Los Angeles County League of United Latin American Citizen Council. He was also named a Notable California State University Graduate in Education.

Dr. Aguilar now serves as CEO and President of International Group, Inc., a firm that provides services to districts across California with issues related to increasing the academic success of students.

## Golfing for Your Community

**Staff Reports**

Hands in the Community invites everyone to participate in its Second Annual Golf Tournament on Friday, April 17 between noon and 5pm at the Valley Oaks Golf Course. There is limited space for team registration ($400 for four people).

•First 5 teams to register will be entered to win dinner for 4 at the Vintage Press.

•$25,000 Hole-in-one sponsored by ITCF (International Testicular Cancer Foundation) underwritten by Lewis & Associates

•Set of TaylorMade Irons Hole-in-one sponsored by Roger Dunn Golf Shops

Leadership Partners at $1,000 receive promotional opportunities and include:

* Team of 4 registration.
* One free mulligan per player.
* Organization recognized as a sponsor during the event.
* Organization's banner displayed during the event.

Online payments are accepted at www.hnconline.org. For more information: (559) 625-3822 ext. 3 or e-mail, hncvisalia@gmail.com.

***Next deadline:***
**March 12, 2015**

# Health

## Covered California Announces Special Enrollment Extension

**Staff Reports**

Family HealthCare Network's (FHCN) team of certified enrollment counselors remain available to the public, as Covered California announced it is now offering a special enrollment opportunity through April 30.

The opportunity allows eligible consumers who did not know or understand there was a tax penalty for being uninsured in 2015 to apply for health coverage.

Those applying must attest that they did not realize there was a tax penalty. FHCN's certified enrollment counselors will continue to offer enrollment services through April 30 at each of the organization's 14 health centers throughout Tulare and Kings Counties, as well as its Resource Center in Porterville.

For the first time, consumers who are filing taxes in 2014 may pay a penalty for not having health insurance coverage.

The penalty for going without insurance in 2015 will increase significantly. Consumers who can afford insurance but choose not to buy it will be subject to a $325 fee per adult in a household, or two percent of their income, whichever is greater.

Visit any FHCN health center to speak with a counselor regarding your coverage options or call the organization's enrollment line at (559) 741-4366 for dates and times available by location.

**Sequoia Wine Tasting**
**Inside**
**Totem Grocery & Gifts**

J&J Cellars - Kelsey See Canyon Vineyards

Call for reservations
(559) 561-4463
45186 Sierra Drive, Three Rivers

## Sequoia Regional Cancer Center Welcomes Medical Oncologist

**Staff Reports**

Sequoia Regional Cancer Center welcomes Lucio M. Nobile, M.D., a medical oncologist to Visalia.

Dr. Nobile joins Robert A. Havard Jr., M.D. and Bhupinder S. Chatrath, M.D., who are part of a private physician practice of medical oncologists at Sequoia Regional Cancer Center. Dr. Nobile, will replace Shu-Dean Hsu, M.D., who is retiring from active practice. The group will hold an open house for Dr. Nobile from 5-7pm on Thursday, March 12, at Sequoia Regional Cancer Center, 4945 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia.

Dr. Nobile has 20 years experience in medical oncology and comes to Visalia from Merced, where he practiced for the past seven years.

"My commitment is to a patient-centered approach focused on sharing medical decision to better serve the expectations, the desires and the needs of patients and families," Dr. Nobile said.

Dr. Nobile is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and Oncology. After graduating from the University of Rome in Medicine and completing five years of post-graduate education at the University of Rome in general surgery, Dr. Nobile moved to New York. There, he completed an internship and residency at Mount Sinai Beth Israel Medical Center, along with a fellowship in medical oncology at the Montefiore Albert Einstein program. At the time, the fellowship was led by Dr. Peter H. Wiernik, a world leader in hematological malignancies and renal cancer. Dr. Nobile completed a second fellowship at the British Columbia Cancer Agency in leukemia and stem cell transplant.

Sequoia Regional Cancer Center, with locations in Visalia and Hanford, is one of California's most advanced cancer treatment facilities. It offers a multidisciplinary approach to cancer care with teams of doctors who work together to guide each patient through diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. The combined efforts of surgeons, radiologists, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, and other caregivers allow for cancer treatment utilizing all the specialties. For more information on Sequoia Regional Cancer Center, visit www.kaweahdelta.org/cancercare.

## Family HealthCare Network Introduces New Visalia Provider

**Staff Reports**

Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) is pleased to announce Adaobi Onochie, FNP-BC as the newest addition to its provider team in Visalia. As a Family Nurse Practitioner, Onochie will offer family medicine services for patients of FHCN's Visalia Oak Health Center in downtown Visalia.

Onochie completed her Master of Science in Nursing with the Family Nurse Practitioner Program at Boston College. Onochie's educational background also includes Bachelor of Science degrees in Nursing and Biology from the University of Massachusetts. Onochie has several years of experience working as a registered nurse and also as a research assistant with the University of Manchester.

Onochie is accepting new patients at FHCN's Visalia Oak Health Center, located at 400 E. Oak Avenue. To schedule an appointment with Family HealthCare Network, please call 1-877-960-3426 (FHCN) or visit www.fhcn.org for more information. The health center is open Monday through Friday, 7am to 9pm and Saturdays, from 7am to 5:pm.


**Fresno Nephrology Medical Group, Inc.**

STEVE SU, M.D.
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YANGMING CAO, M.D.
HEMANT DHINGRA, M.D.
GREGORY MARTINEZ, M.D.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

We are pleased to announce the opening of our Visalia offices.

**Visalia Nephrology Medical Group**
**and**
**Announce the Association**
**of**
**DAVID HEANEY, M.D. and MAGDY G. MAKSY, M.D.**

515 W. Acequia Suite A, Visalia, CA 93291

500 South Sante Fe Avenue, Visalia, CA 93292

**Specializing in Kidney Disease, Hypertension, Transplant Evaluation, Diabetic Kidney Disease**

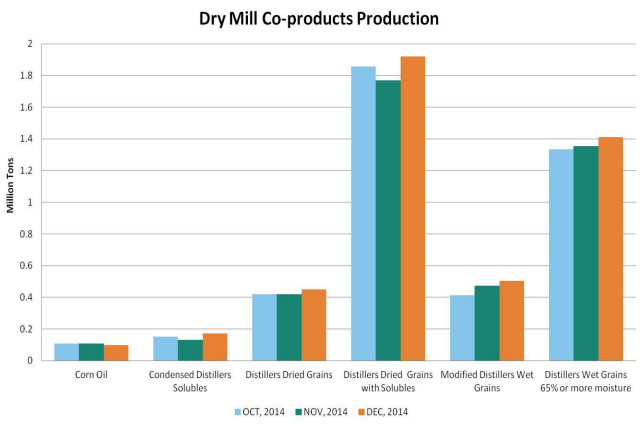
Please call our office at 559-228-6600 if you wish to schedule your next appointment at our Visalia offices.

# Agriculture

## First Report under New Current Agricultural Industrial Reports Program Released

**Staff Reports**

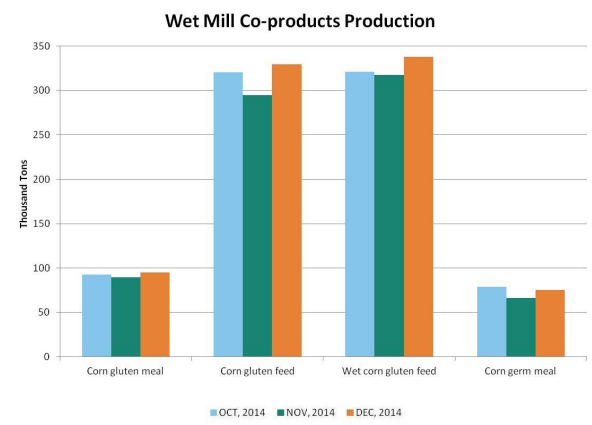
The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has released the first report under its new Current Agricultural Industrial Reports (CAIR) program. Called Grain Crushings and Co-Products Production, the publication provides data about agricultural commodities consumed for alcohol and other uses as well as the production of co-products and products in the United States from October-December 2014.




The report will be published monthly with the second report, to include January and final December data, scheduled for release March 2, 2015. Key highlights from the Grain Crushings and Co-Products Production report include: Total corn consumed for alcohol and other uses was 510.1 million bushels in December 2014. Total corn consumption was up 5% from November 2014 and up 7% from October 2014. Sorghum consumption for fuel alcohol was 889,000 hundredweight during December 2014. Total sorghum consumption was down 57% from November 2014 and down 53% from October 2014. Dry mill co-product production of distillers dried grains with solubles (DDGS) was at 1.9 million tons during December 2014, up 8% from November 2014 and up 3% from October 2014. Wet mill corn gluten feed production was at 329.4 thousand tons during December 2014, up 12% from November 2014 and up 3% from October 2014.

In addition to Grain Crushings and Co-Products Production, other publications scheduled to be released within the CAIR program include: Flour Milling (quarterly beginning May 1, 2015.) Cotton System (monthly beginning May 1, 2015.) Fats & Oils: Production, Consumption and Stocks (monthly beginning August 3, 2015.) Oilseed Crushings (monthly beginning August 3, 2015.)

"Data from the CAIR program are crucial to U.S. economic policy, help industries analyze markets, plan, forecast, and make well-informed business decisions," said NASS Administrator Joseph T. Reilly.




Certain publications, which included data about agricultural manufacturing, were previously part of the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Industrial Reports (CIR) program which began in 1904. Due to budget reprioritizations, the bureau discontinued its collection of data for the CIR program in 2011. Given its long and well-respected history of gathering and publishing agricultural data, Congress authorized and appropriated funds for NASS to design and implement the Current Agricultural Industrial Report program.

"Although the industry's participation in the CAIR program is required by law, we truly appreciate the time and effort all of our respondents expend when they fill out the questionnaires," said Reilly. "We at NASS are committed to the success of the CAIR program because the data are vital to all who use our reports including private industry, academic researchers, government agencies, and many others."

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents, ensuring that no individual respondent or operation can be identified. Participation in the CAIR program is both required by law and protected by law (Title 7, U.S. Code). NASS collects information directly from industry representatives who participate on a confidential basis. Confidentiality rules require reporting data only in aggregate form. NASS cannot report data where a single producer dominates a production category and could be identified.

Grain Crushings and Co-Products Production and all other NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov.

NASS is the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture and is committed to providing timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.

## Water Shortages: More Rural Suffering

Continued drought and problems in water management combine to extend the suffering in rural communities, according to the California Farm Bureau Federation. CFBF President Paul Wenger said today's announcement that the federal Central Valley Project will likely deliver no water to most of its agricultural customers—for a second straight year—reinforces the need to move quickly on water projects authorized by the Proposition 1 water bond and on congressional reform of environmental laws.

"The CVP announcement is both saddening and maddening," Wenger said. "It's saddening because the continued cutoff of water will prolong the impact of water shortages on farmers, their employees and rural communities. It's maddening because California still struggles to manage water wisely and flexibly, especially in dry years."

Wenger noted ongoing conflicts in water management, specifically about how much water is repeatedly dedicated to protection of fish and wildlife at the expense of jobs and food production for people.

"In a year like this, when every drop of water is more precious than ever, we must improve our ability to store storm flows when we can," he said. "People have real frustration about bureaucratic decisions that send excess water out to sea beyond what's needed for the ecosystem and delta water quality, when that water could be stored for later use, both by people and in the environment."

Wenger said the continued drought lends urgency to the current process of allocating money to be invested from the water bond approved by California voters last November.

"Farm Bureau and other organizations will continue to work with the California Water Commission to ensure that bond money for surface-water storage projects is apportioned as rapidly and as effectively as possible," Wenger said. "We are suffering now from our past failure to improve our water system. We shouldn't compound the suffering by studying projects to death. It's time to invest the money that Californians voted to invest."

He also called on Congress to move quickly "to provide relief from rigid environmental laws that have failed to balance species protections with human needs."

## Zero Allocation... Again

The definition of balance at the State and Federal level is again highlighted by an announcement that producers south of the Delta will receive no water.

"Two years in a row zero allocation is the message while other parties receive an allocation for farming, the environment or municipal needs and that is the definition of balance by federal decision makers which questions how they define balance," states California Citrus Mutual President Joel Nelsen.

Two weeks ago the State Water Resources Control Board executive director took it upon himself to override environmentally friendly fish agencies and not allow additional pumping designed to assist citizens south of the Delta.

"His statement that real data is not fool proof and he would exercise his judgment runs parallel to the federal policy which is unacceptable but consistent, that producing food is not a priority," Nelsen said.

Since 1992 more than seven million acre feet of water has been transferred away from landowners in the Southern San Joaquin Valley with no accountability as to the environmental successes achieved. Since 1992 those sourcing water from the Friant system have been paying additional dollars per acre foot for environmental enhancements with no accountability. The State of California has more than 320 species listed as endangered and yet all the efforts have not led to one species being removed from the Endangered Species Act list.

"Just give more is the answer and state and federal officials remove prime agricultural land from production to accomplish what," Nelsen asked.

Preserving the Delta from salt water intrusion is a priority according to the CCM President but "preserving smelt so that they can be consumed by predator fish or toxins dumped thereby requiring more water is unacceptable. Establishing cold water habitats with warm water is ludicrous.

"We have to be the only state in the nation and the only nation on earth establishing policies that destroys the production of food. That's a legacy these two administrations must explain," he concluded.

Photo courtesy S and S Pics/Thunderbowl Raceway

# WOO

Continued from p. 24

The inaugural World of Outlaws event at Merle Stone Chevrolet Thunderbowl Raceway occurred in September of 2003 when 20-time series champion Steve Kinser scored the victory over Tim Shaffer & Clovis, California's Jason Meyers.

This year marks the 12th overall season that the Greatest Show on Dirt competes at the one-third mile clay oval.

Past World of Outlaws Sprint Car Series feature winners at the Merle Stone Chevrolet Thunderbowl Raceway

- 2014- Daryn Pittman on March 14, Rico Abreu on March 15
- 2013- Tim Kaeding on March 15, Craig Dollansky on March 16
- 2012 - Tim Kaeding on March 16
- 2011 - Joey Saldana on March 19
- 2010 - Jason Meyers on March 5, Joey Saldana on March 6
- 2009 - Randy Hannagan on March 20, Joey Saldana on March 21
- 2008 - Jac Haudenschild on Oct. 18
- 2007 - Joey Saldana on Feb. 23, Tim Kaeding on Feb. 24, Donny Schatz on Oct. 13
- 2005 - Tim Shaffer on Feb. 25, Donny Schatz on October 14, Sammy Swindell on Oct. 15
- 2004 - Erin Crocker on October 29, Terry McCarl on October 30
- 2003 - Steve Kinser on September 3

**Recycle this paper - read it in Spanish**

# Lemon Cove Women's Club History Day and Bake Sale March 21

**Pam Lurz**

You may have driven by the Pogue Hotel on Highway 198 (32792 Sierra Drive) in Lemon Cove many times.

March 21 is your chance to see the inside and explore the upstairs revamped museum of local history. A History Day ( and Bake Sale) will be held from 1-4pm.

For a $5 donation the Lemon Cove Women's Club offers dessert and drink and time to explore. Perhaps a figure from the past will give some personal history.

In 1879, the two-storey 13-room hotel was constructed. Known as the Cottonwoods, the project was financed by the partnership of C.W. Crocker and J.B. Wallace of San Francisco and J.W.C. Pogue.

The Pogue family came to the Lime Kiln area in 1865 and eventually owned over 10,000 acres. Mr. Pogue planted citrus in 1877.

In 1881 Mr. Pogue became the sole owner of the hotel, which was also his family's home until his death in 1907.

The building remained in the family until 1936, when Nora Pogue Montgomery, the youngest of nine Pogue children, gave it to the Lemon Cove Women's Club.

All funds raised by the several events held each year maintain and improve this historical site.

In 2014 the kitchen was rewired and to the club's great relief the knob and tube wiring replaced.

Projects on the wish list include repainting and an upstairs fire escape.

Visit us on line at: lemoncovewc.org. Then please plan on visiting History Day and taking home goodies from the bake sale.

Photo courtesy Lemon Cove Women's Club.